ORIGINAL SIN

by

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"The Property of"
Morgan Creek Productions
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FADE IN:

As CREDITS BEGIN and ROLL...

INT. A TELEVISION STUDIO

MICHAEL CAREY stands among his studio audience, a cordless mike in his hand. He moves as he talks. He is in his early 40's. He is good-looking and wears an Armapi suit.

On a slightly elevated stage at the front of the room sit three women.

ONE OF THEM (flatly)
I came home from work and found my husband in bed with my best friend.

MICHAEL (loud, big grin)
Surprise!

The audience laughs.

ANOTHER STUDIO AUDIENCE

A WOMAN
I'm in love with my sister's husband. I don't know how to tell her.

MICHAEL (smiles)
You just did. We made sure she is watching the show.

The audience cheers.

ANOTHER STUDIO AUDIENCE

Two women sit on the slightly elevated stage.

THE OLDER ONE
My daughter dresses like a hooker!

The audience boos.

THE YOUNGER ONE
Mom, you're the one whose boobs are always hanging out.

The audience whoops and boos.

THE OLDER ONE
They are not!

And she pulls her low-cut dress up. The audience roars.

MICHAEL
Does hooking run in the family?

The audience cheers the line wildly.

ANOTHER STUDIO AUDIENCE

A YOUNG WOMAN
I'm so beautiful that I can't get dates.

The audience boos -- she is attractive, but a little pudgy.

MICHAEL (to audience)
Do you think she's beautiful?

AUDIENCE (chanting)
Pig, pig, pig, pig, pig!

ANOTHER STUDIO AUDIENCE

We see a man in his 30's on a TV screen set up on the stage. Sitting near the screen is a young woman.

MICHAEL
You raped this young woman seven years ago. Do you have anything to say to her?

The young woman is crying quietly.

THE MAN (on satellite screen)
I'm sorry.

The audience groans.

MICHAEL
You're sorry. That's it? You're sorry?

The audience boos.

THE MAN (choked up)
I'd give anything to live that part of my life over again.

MICHAEL
You mean you liked it so much you'd rape her again?

The audience boos loudly.

THE MAN (upset)
Please. You know that's not what I meant.

MICHAEL (to woman)
Do you have anything to say to this scumbag?

The audience cheers loudly -- the man puts his head down.

THE WOMAN (to TV screen)
I hope they give you AIDS in jail!

The audience's roar is explosive. Michael smiles as they cheer.

CREDITS END.

INT. NINTH FLOOR - EBS BUILDING - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Michael gets out of the elevator. He wears another gorgeous Armani suit. He looks tired. There are bags under his eyes. The dazzle we saw with the studio audiences is gone.

DEBBIE, a production girl in her early 20's, very pretty in a coed way, is waiting for him at the elevator with a mug of coffee. He gets it as soon as he gets off. Other people hurry about. Someone hands him his mail.

DEBBIE (nervous)
Twenty minutes, Michael.

MICHAEL
I'm here, I'm here.
(he grins)
I love your perfume.

He mock-leers at her as they hurry down the corridor. She is embarrassed.

DEBBIE (a shy smile)
Stop it, Michael.

MICHAEL (smiles)
I haven't even started it yet. How can I stop it, Julie?

DEBBIE
Debbie.

MICHAEL
Debbie. Sorry. I've got a very bad memory.

He smiles. He didn't mean to hurt her; or did he? She looks hurt.

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM - EBS

A roomful of TV monitors -- we see the frozen images of four people -- three women and a man.

MICHAEL (casually)
Hello there.

SAM ABRAMS and RITA RIVERA are there, along with technicians and assistant directors around the monitors.

Sam looks at him, grins, and shakes his head. He is balding and white-bearded, in his early 60's, the producer, gruff, a survivor.

Rita Rivera is in her early 40's: a woman who's seen too many prima donnas in her life, she is the director. She is black.

MICHAEL (continuing)
What's the problem? Is there a problem?

RITA (angrily)
Fourteen minutes, Michael!

MICHAEL
My watch must be slow.

He looks at his gold Rolex, winks at Sam.

RITA (angrily)
You look like shit, Michael!

He suddenly hugs Rita hard.

MICHAEL
I love you, Rita. I love you so much.

She breaks from the hug angrily as Sam laughs.

RITA (flustered)
Do you want to see the pre-ints?

Michael looks at the screens.

MICHAEL
They don't look like they've been fathered by aliens.

RITA (angrily)
They're not. The alien children are tomorrow.

She catches him grinning at Sam.

RITA (continuing)
Do you want to see them or don't you?

MICHAEL
Sure. Roll this one.

He points to one of the images on the monitor. She is a beautiful woman. She is in her late 20's or early 30's. There is an intensity about her.

THE WOMAN
I see these flashes. I know that I loved him in a past life. His name is Ethan. He calls me Elizabeth. I feel great joy... and I feel great pain.
(she smiles)
I know this sounds crazy.

MICHAEL (wearily)
That's enough, thank you.

He starts to head out of the room.

INT. THE STUDIO

The room is full. A typical studio talk-show audience. There is a young man onstage holding up a card. The card says: ENERGY!

The audience applauds, whoops, yells, pumps itself up. We see some of the same faces we saw in the audience over the credits.

INT. THE CORRIDOR

Michael walks down the corridor with Sam Abrams alongside him. He takes the coat of his Armani suit off and slings it over his shoulder.

MICHAEL
I think it's those Harlequin romances they all read. Past life -- Jesus. They wet their brains, you know? Psychic lubricity.

They step into a make-up room.

INT. THE STUDIO

The card the young man holds up onstage now says: MORE ENERGY!

The audience applauds, whoops, yells, and carries on even louder.

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM

A woman in her 60's waits by a chair in front of a big mirror; the lighting is very bright.

SAM (laughs)
Psychic lubricity -- I like that.

MICHAEL
You're so sick, Sam, I knew you'd like that.

He sits down in the chair facing the mirror, looks at himself.

MICHAEL (continuing)
Jesus. I do look like shit.

THE MAKE-UP WOMAN (smiles)
You've been a bad boy again, haven't you, darling? You're always such a bad boy.

MICHAEL (grins)
I've got to do something that's fun.

INT. THE STUDIO

The young man standing on stage holds up a card that says: EXTREME ENERGY!

The audience hoots, yells, applauds -- is going crazy.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM

The four people we saw on the monitors earlier are sitting here. Michael sweeps in with Rita and Sam. He is wearing makeup.

RITA (urgently)
Four minutes!

SAM
Michael, I'd like you to meet our guests.

MICHAEL (brightly)
Hel-lo!

He wears a phony showbiz smile; Rita checks her notepad.

RITA
Peter Saminski, Agnes Phillips --

Michael shakes hands with them mechanically, freezing his smile, moving fast.

MICHAEL
Are you having fun in L.A.? Don't you just love L.A.?

RITA
Mary Lou Sampson, Jody Crandall.

MICHAEL (shaking hands)
Hello, hello. Are you ready to have fun?

He shakes Jody Crandall's hand. She is the young woman whose pre-interview tape he looked at in the control room. Her hair is different than it was in the tape. She is intense but there is a sexiness about her.

Michael looks her over, gives her a special smile, his practiced eye at work.

MICHAEL
Is it Ms. Crandall or Mrs. Crandall?

JODY
It's Dr. Crandall.

Their eyes are on each other.

MICHAEL
I'm never that formal with my guests.

JODY (smiles)
How about just "Jody"?

MICHAEL (smiles)
I'm never that intimate, either.

JODY (smiles)
I don't consider "Jody" intimate. Everybody calls me that.

He looks at her a beat, smiles.

RITA (urgently)
One minute, Michael.

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM

Sam, Rita, and others in front of the monitors.

ONE OF THEM
Five -- four -- three -- two -- one!

We see optics on screen, the big letters "CAREY", and hear the show's theme song.

AN ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Live from Hollywood! It's Michael Carey!

INT. THE STUDIO

Michael comes into the room. His smile is dazzling, the puffiness gone from his eyes. He looks sensational. The audience goes berserk, applauding, whooping, yelling. Off to the side, off the television camera, we see the young man holding up a sign that says: GO CRAZY!

MICHAEL
Hey! Hey! Hey! Hello, hello, hello!
It's nice to see all of you!

They are applauding, yelling.

MICHAEL
Boy are you looking good!

They applaud him some more.

A WOMAN IN AUDIENCE (yelling, loud)
You're lookin good too, Michael!

It gets some big laughs from the audience.

MICHAEL (shyly)
Thank you, thank you, thank you.

He wanders out into the audience with his cordless mike. He goes up to the woman who yelled at him. He looks her over with a smile and a mock leer.

MICHAEL
Yummy, yummy, yummy.

The woman blushes, laughs embarrassedly as the audience roars and hoots.

MICHAEL (to the woman)
I think you and I have been lovers in a past life.

The woman laughs embarrassedly as she shakes her head... and as the audience roars.

He walks around among the audience.

MICHAEL
Don't laugh. Did you know that a Gallup Poll shows that 45 million Americans believe in past life, in reincarnation? That's 26 percent of us -- get this: 38 percent of those under 30 believe in it.
(A beat)
Of course we all know that the younger they are, the stupider they are.

It gets some laughs. Off the TV camera, the young man holds up the sign that says: MORE ENERGY.

MICHAEL (as he wanders)
I think Reincarnation's great. You know what I call it? Death on the Installment Plan.

It gets more and louder laughs as the young man waves the sign that says: MORE ENERGY.

MICHAEL (as he wanders)
Well, anyway...

He smiles, passes the woman that he mock-leered at in the audience, gives her a mock air-kiss... as she... and the audience laugh.

MICHAEL
Anyway... we've got four people with us today... four <u>courageous</u> people --

He smiles; it gets more laughs.

MICHAEL
-- who will share their previous lives with us. I'm not going to share mine with you because I've never had one. No, sir. Once is more than enough. Some poor schmuck's going to have to come <u>back</u> as me.

It gets more laughs, hoots, and applause.

MICHAEL (smiles)
We'll be -- right back! Into the past! After this station break! So our sponsors can make money! Right now! In the present!

The audience laughs, applauds louder, as the young man on the stage holds up the sign that says: EXTREME ENERGY!

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Sam, Rita, and the others. An ad comes onto one of the monitors. On the other, we see Michael signing autographs for his audience. The other monitors show the individual guests.

We see Peter Saminski on one of the monitors; he looks very nervous.

AN ASST. DIRECTOR
Number four looks like he's going to piss his pants.

ANOTHER ASST. DIRECTOR
Michael's going to have fun with this crew.

SAM
What -- you don't think he believes in this stuff?

RITA
All he believes in is his ratings.

SAM (grins)
That's why he's so good at this.

AN ASST. DIRECTOR
Four -- three -- two-- one!

INT. THE STUDIO

Michael moving around in the audience.

MICHAEL
Peter Saminski is a computer programmer from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mr. Saminski, would you begin?

He sits up on the stage with the other guests.

SAMINSKI (very nervous)
Well, I was a general in Babylon. Later on, I was a Roman gladiator. Then I was an ant in China and later --

MICHAEL
Wait, wait, wait --

The audience laughs.

MICHAEL
Did you say you were an ant in China?

He speaks like he is in shock. The audience laughs.

SAMINSKI (nervous)
Yes. An ant.

The audience laughs.

MICHAEL
Oh, boy!

The audience laughs louder.

MICHAEL
That must not have been fun. There are a lot of people in China. Did you ever get stepped on?

More laughs.

SAMINSKI
That's how I died.

MICHAEL (to the audience)
Oh, my!

More laughs.

MICHAEL
Mrs. Phillips, were you ever an ant?

She is a very heavy woman.

MRS. PHILLIPS
Thank God I wasn't.

More laughs.

MICHAEL (to Audience)
Thank God she wasn't!

More laughs.

MRS. PHILLIPS
I was a harem girl in Mesopotamia -- .

MICHAEL (brightly)
Was that fun?

More laughs.

MICHAEL (brightly)
That must've been fun!

MRS. PHILLIPS
It was tiring.

MICHAEL (slowly, loud)
Really?

It gets a roar.

MICHAEL
Ms. Jody Crandall is from New Yawk City. She is an associate professor of American History at Columbia University. Ms. Crandall, did you ever do anything in a past life that was... tiring?

It gets a big laugh.

JODY (after a beat)
Why are you doing this?

She says it quietly, but there is a gravity to it. It stops the audience for a moment, but there are some nervous titters.

MICHAEL (to Audience)
Why am I doing this? Me?
(he smiles)
I'm not the one talking about having been... an ant... an ant in China, oh boy.

The glibness reassures the audience. They start to laugh again.

JODY
This isn't fair. This is bullshit. You know it. You're turning us into circus freaks.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

SOMEBODY YELLING
Bleep the "bullshit."

SOMEBODY ELSE (yelling)
I got it.

Sam, watching Michael and Jody on the monitor --

SAM (smiles)
She's dead meat.

INT. STUDIO

MICHAEL (smiles)
I'm turning you into circus freaks? If Mr. Saminski here says he was an ant, I'll take his word for it.

SAMINSKI (nervous)
I was an ant!

It gets a big laugh.

SAMINSKI (offended)
Well I was! They stepped on me!

It sets off a roar.

MICHAEL (to Jody, smiles)
What can I say?

More laughs. Jody looks at him -- she smiles suddenly.

JODY (quietly)
Fuck you.

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM

SOMEBODY YELLING
Bleep the "fuck"!

SOMEBODY ELSE YELLING
I got the "fuck," I got it!

INT. THE STUDIO

Jody gets up and starts to walk calmly out of the studio as the audience boos, catcalls, gets up, raises fists, and yells. Off to the side, we see the young man holding up the sign that says: GO CRAZY!

Michael watches her go. She is gone --

MICHAEL (to Saminski)
I don't know why she got so upset about you being an ant.

It gets laughs.

SAMINSKI (upset)
Well it wasn't my fault I was an ant.

More laughs.

MICHAEL (to Saminski, smiles)
Don't worry about it. We get all kinds here.

It gets a roar.

INT. THE CORRIDOR FROM THE STUDIO

As he comes out -- Sam and Rita are there with some others.

SAM (grins)
Great show, kid.

MICHAEL (smiles)
I'm sorry she walked. She would've been a great punching bag.

RITA
He likes the spunky ones as long as he's in control.

They walk down the corridor.

MICHAEL (grins)
I'm always in control. You make sure I'm in control, Rita. You're my director.

SAM
Here's Monday. Read it.

Sam hands him a file. Michael looks at it.

MICHAEL
Penile implants? Come on, Sam, haven't we got any shame?

SAM
Penile implants are a testament to medical progress. The show will be... uplifting.

Michael laughs, shakes his head.

RITA
You two make me sick.

Michael and Sam laugh... and, still laughing, Michael opens the door to his office.

INT. HIS OFFICE - DAY

The office is dark and big; it has a separate sitting area. The shades are drawn. He puts only a small light on, goes to the bar, pours himself a shot of Stoli, gets ice for it. As he reaches for the glass, we see his hands shake a little. He takes a long slug of the drink, stands there for a moment.

A VOICE (quietly)
How could you do that?

He turns, badly startled. Jody Crandall sits on the couch in the darkness, watching him. He looks at her a beat, reaches for the phone.

JODY (continuing)
You don't have to call security. I'm not going to hurt you.
(she smiles)
You don't like mixing with your public, do you? it's much easier making fun of people than talking to them.

He looks at her a long beat, takes his hand off the phone.

MICHAEL
What do you want... Dr. Crandall?

JODY
I want to know what gives you the right to do that to human beings.

He looks at her sitting there in the darkness.

MICHAEL
My contract gives me the right. Nobody forced you on the show. You've seen the show before. It's not the human relations hour, is it?

They look at each other a beat -- she smiles slowly.

MICHAEL
The question is -- why did you want to do the show?

He takes another slug of his vodka.

JODY (after a beat)
You're very good at answering questions with questions, aren't you?

There is a flatness to her tone; an absence of all emotion.

MICHAEL (after a beat, smiles)
It's a trick of the trade.

They look at each other a long beat.

JODY (quietly)
You're a trickster. You play games with people.

She keeps looking at him with those intense eyes.

MICHAEL (after a beat, smiles)
Are you sure I shouldn't call security?

She smiles slowly at that, then shakes her head.

MICHAEL
Would you like a drink?

She gets up slowly, walks to him.

JODY (after a beat)
She's a star-fucker, he says. She looks good. So what if she's crazy.
(a beat)
I'm not.

They are only a foot apart.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
You're not a star-fucker or you're not crazy?

She looks at him, smiles slowly.

JODY
I would like a drink.

MICHAEL (after a beat, smiles)
What would you like?

He turns to the bar.

JODY
Not here. At the Bel-Aire. At seven o'clock.

MICHAEL
You'll stand me up, won't you? You'll have fun talking about how you stood Michael Carey up for years.

JODY
Why would anybody want to stand you up?

And she walks out. He looks after her, watches her.

EXT. THE BEL-AIRE HOTEL - NIGHT

He pulls up in a classic old Porsche, gets out right in front. The VALET GUY goes up to him --

THE VALET GUY
Mr. Carey. You're alone?

MICHAEL (grins)
Not for long, Hector.

THE VALET GUY (grins)
Mr. Carey! My man!

INT. THE BAR AT THE BEL-AIRE - NIGHT

He walks in, looks around, doesn't see her. The MAITRE D' comes to him. A pianist plays Jerome Kern and Johnny Mercer.

MAITRE D' (smiles)
Mr. Carey, nice to see you.

MICHAEL (looking around)
I'm going to have a drink at the bar, Angie.

MAITRE D'
But Miss Crandall is waiting for you. I have your usual table.

He looks at the maitre d', surprised, follows him.

He sees her. She is wearing a black cocktail dress, a string of pearls. She looks stunning. He gets to the table, takes a long look at her, smiles.

JODY (smiles)
You look surprised.

MICHAEL (smiles)
You look incredible.

He sits down next to her; there is a drink in front of him.

JODY
I ordered your drink for you.

MICHAEL
What'd you order?

JODY
Stoli with a twist. Very macho.

He looks at her; how does she know his drink?

JODY (smiles)
That's what you drank at the office. Cheers.

MICHAEL
Cheers.

JODY
What are we drinking to?

MICHAEL (after a beat, smiles)
Ants in China?

JODY (looks at him evenly)
I don't think so.

MICHAEL (smiles)
Okay. How about apologies?

JODY
I don't have anything to apologize for.

He looks at her, smiles a little.

MICHAEL
Okay. How about us?

JODY (after a beat)
Us?
(she laughs)
Come on. Is that what you drink to when you bring your other guests here?

MICHAEL
What guests?

JODY
The guests from your show that you bring down here to the Bel Aire.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Who says I do that?

JODY (after a beat, smiles)
Your eyes. They're dead.

He looks at her a beat.

MICHAEL
Shit, I should've left my makeup on.

JODY
Are you married?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
That's a personal question, isn't it? We don't even know each other.

JODY (after a beat)
We could get to know each other.

MICHAEL
I don't have relationships with guests from my show.

JODY
Okay. If you don't want to cut the shit, I'll leave.

He looks at her a beat.

JODY
You don't want me to do that, do you, Michael?

MICHAEL (after a long beat)
I was married when I was 19 --
(a beat; he grins)
-- divorced when I was 21.

They look at each other a beat -- she smiles. He slugs his drink.

MICHAEL
Where are you staying?

JODY (after a beat)
Here.

MICHAEL
We put you up at the Bel-Aire? On our budget?

JODY (smiles)
You put me up at the Holiday Inn on Wilshire, but I'm staying here.

MICHAEL
You don't like the Holiday Inn?

JODY (smiles)
I know how much you like the Bel Aire.

She gets up, purse in hand, smiles.

MICHAEL
Are you leaving?

JODY
Yes.

MICHAEL (smiles)
This was it? This is how we get to know each other?

JODY (smiles)
Didn't you enjoy it?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
You're the trickster.

JODY (smiles)
Yes I am.

They look at each other a beat and she puts her room key down on the table. He looks at it, then at her.

MICHAEL
What if I stand you up?

JODY
Not a chance, Michael.

She leans down suddenly and brushes her lips against his quickly, lightly, then turns and walks away. He watches her.

INT. A CORRIDOR - THE BEL-AIRE - NIGHT

He opens a door with the key. The room is dark.

INT. THE ROOM

It is the parlor to a spacious suite. He looks around in the darkness. There is a vase of roses on a table.

MICHAEL
Hello?

There is no answer. He looks a little nervous. He sees the bedroom door is open, but the bedroom is dark. He goes to the door.

MICHAEL
Anybody here?

He opens the door completely, walks into the dark bedroom, his steps hesitant, wary.

JODY (in a whisper behind him)
Hello.

He turns quickly, startled. He stares. She wears a very classy long white lace nightgown.

JODY (quietly)
You didn't stand me up.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Not a chance.

Their eyes are on each other. She steps closer to him -- her body now inches away from him. She raises a hand suddenly to his face. He almost flinches.

JODY (quietly)
Don't be afraid of me.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
I'm not.

A beat, and she kisses him on the lips very gently.

JODY
Maybe you should be.

He says nothing, looks at her lips.

JODY
Maybe I'm setting you up somehow.

A beat, and he kisses her lips gently. They look at each other.

MICHAEL
I've got good lawyers.

She kisses him again on the lips lightly.

JODY
My father has better ones.

He kisses her lips again.

MICHAEL
Who's your father?

JODY (as she kisses him)
Justin Crandall.

He stops a second, looks at her.

JODY
Are you afraid of me now, Michael?

He looks at her a beat, kisses her.

MICHAEL
Petrified.

JODY (smiles)
That's very witty. I like that.

And she moves to kiss him again -- as she does, he puts his hands around her and pulls her in very close against himself.

JODY (as she kisses him)
I like that, too.

His lips dig into hers.

INT. THE BEDROOM - LATER

The room is dark, we can't see clearly. The scene should be done with a play of darkness, angles of light, and shadows. They are in bed, naked. He kisses her neck. He moves down and starts to kiss her breasts. Her eyes are open, staring.

He moves his head lower, to the left and just below her navel. We see a quarter-sized purple welt, webbed deep into her skin. He kisses it.

INT. THE BEDROOM - LATER

She is asleep, against him, her body covered with sweat. He is awake, his arms around her, watching her. The room is dark, we can't see clearly.

JODY (in a whisper)
Why did you make me betray him?

He looks at her a long beat, realizes she is asleep.

INT. THE BEDROOM - MORNING

He is in bed, asleep, on his side. He wakes up. He sees her -- she is wearing a white bra, white panties, getting dressed. He watches her a beat, then reaches out and touches her stomach -- the discolored welt there.

MICHAEL
What's that?

JODY
It's a birthmark.

She moves away from him in embarrassment, puts a pretty, girlish dress on. He sits up in bed, sees a suitcase near the window.

MICHAEL
Where are you going?

JODY
Back to New York. I've got classes to teach, young minds to form.

MICHAEL
I envy them the process.

She looks at him, smiles, then keeps packing.

MICHAEL
Wham, bam, thank you, ma'am.

He is still a little asleep.

JODY
Wham, bam, thank you, Michael.

She closes the suitcase. He watches her a beat.

MICHAEL
What is it you want from me?

JODY
Maybe I already got what I wanted from you.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
I may be vain, but I don't lie to myself. There are better boy toys.

JODY (looks at him, smiles)
That's for sure.

MICHAEL (smiles)
Thank you.

JODY (smiles)
Anytime, Michael. You are vain.

He watches her pack. She looks at him.

JODY
Help me find out who I am.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
You're Justin Crandall's daughter.
You must have had some childhood.

JODY (not looking at him)
My name was Elizabeth. I loved a man
named Ethan. Help me find him.

He stares at her a beat and then he suddenly laughs.

MICHAEL
You've got to be fucking kidding me.

She looks at him, the look even, deadpan. There is a knock at the door and the BELLMAN comes in.

THE BELLMAN
Hey, Mr. Carey, it's nice to see you
again, sir. I just loved that show
you did -- what is that stuff?
Fetishes, that's it.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

JODY (to bellman)
Just this bag here, please.

He takes it.

THE BELLMAN
See you again real soon, Mr. Carey.

And he leaves.

JODY (after a beat, to Michael)
Will you help me?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
You're serious.

A beat, and she nods.

MICHAEL
How exactly -- be very specific here, please -- do you think I can help you?

He smiles.

JODY
You can put me on your show. Just me, nobody else. You can help me tell what I know. Somebody out there has to know something.

He looks at her a beat.

MICHAEL
You are crazy.

A beat, and she smiles at him and then starts out of the room. She turns back and looks at him, the smile gone.

JODY
I'm afraid, Michael.

MICHAEL
Of what?

JODY
I don't know, of me maybe.

MICHAEL
Well, now I'm afraid of you, too.

He smiles a little.

JODY (after a beat, smiles)
No you're not.

A beat, as they look at each other.

MICHAEL
I don't believe in any of that shit.

JODY
You don't have to believe in it to help me. All you have to do is put me on your show. Think about it, Michael. Wouldn't I be a great show?

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - DAY

On the big TV, we see Jody, on videotape.

It is the same pre-interview which Michael looked at briefly in the control room. Michael sits in his office, watching her image intensely.

JODY (on tape)
It's all scattered. We're in a yellow room. I want to tell Ethan something. The curtain billows from the wind. It's hot in the room. I can't tell him. Dogs... There are dogs barking. There's a knife... The curtain goes on fire.

Sam walks in.

SAM (loud)
What are you doing in here? It's ten o'clock in the morning for christ's sake!

Michael hits the remote and freezes her image on the big screen.

MICHAEL (quietly)
Do you know who she is, Sam?

SAM (looks)
Yeah, she's the one with the mouth on her.

MICHAEL
She's Justin Crandall's daughter.

Sam looks amazed.

SAM
Justin Crandall? What the hell's she doing on this show? We don't do tycoons' daughters, we do riffraff. We don't do socialites, we do loony-tunes. Wait a minute, she is a loony-tune. She was an ant.

MICHAEL
The other one was the ant --

SAM
So what -- Nelson wants to see us Monday.

Michael keeps staring at her frozen image.

MICHAEL
Ratings?

SAM
Ratings.

Michael goes to the bar, pours himself a Stoli.

MICHAEL
Bad?

SAM
Bad.

MICHAEL
How bad?

He sips the drink.

SAM
They canceled us in Seattle; they moved us from 12:30 to 1:30 in Chicago.

MICHAEL
That's not so bad.

SAM
From P.M. to A.M.

Michael takes another sip from the drink.

MICHAEL
That's bad.

SAM (grins)
No shit, Sherlock, tell me about it.

A long beat, as Michael stares at the screen again. He picks up his phone.

MICHAEL
Call Justin Crandall, set up an appointment for me as soon as possible.
(a beat)
Yes. That Justin Crandall.

SAM
What makes you think Justin Crandall is going to see you?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Maybe he watches the show. What else does he have to do besides count his money?

An OLDER MAN suddenly stands at the door.

THE OLDER MAN
Can you tell me where the pre-interview room is?

SAM
Penile implants?

THE OLDER MAN (smiles)
Yes siree, that's me.

SAM
Down the hall.

THE OLDER MAN
Thank you.
(a beat, he winks)
Hey, they work.

Michael hits the remote control again.

JODY (on tape)
There was a knife. I don't know. The dogs keep barking. I can hear them.

She looks very disturbed; her eyes are far away.

INT. MICHAEL'S PORSCHE - DAY

Michael drives. The old Porsche. It pulls up to a guardhouse at a gated estate in Newport Beach. It is on the water, yachts docked near it.

MICHAEL (to guard)
Michael Carey to see Mr. Crandall.

The guard looks at a sheet of paper.

THE GUARD
Park in front of the main house, please, sir.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

He drives the Porsche down the private road -- it is a big, secluded estate.

He sees several glass buildings ahead. The "main house" is a glass mansion.

There are three young men in suits waiting there. Michael stops the car, gets out.

EXT. THE MAIN HOUSE

MICHAEL
Good morning.

ONE OF THE MEN
Mr. Crandall is expecting you, Mr. Carey.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

He starts going with them towards the house.

ONE OF THEM
You don't mind, do you, sir?

Before he knows quite what's going on, they very expertly frisk him.

ONE OF THEM (continuing)
Routine, sir.

INT. THE HOUSE

As one of them leads him through this palatial place, furnished in impeccable taste.

They get to a den. The man opens the door for him. It overlooks the sea.

INT. THE DEN

JUSTIN CRANDALL waits for him there. He is cold and austere, in his late 60's. He is a big, heavy man.

MICHAEL (smiles)
Good morning, Mr. Crandall. It's nice of you to see me.

They shake hands.

CRANDALL
I enjoyed your work on Public Broadcasting. Why did you leave, Mr. Carey? You're doing something entirely different now.

MICHAEL (smiles)
I left because I wanted to make money. I'm sure that's a reason you can understand. Besides, you <u>do</u> watch my show, don't you?

Crandall assesses him a beat, smiles, sits down.

MICHAEL (continuing)
Your daughter came to see me.

CRANDALL
I have six daughters and three sons. . .

MICHAEL
Jody.

CRANDALL (smiles)
What did she come to see you about?

MICHAEL
About helping her discover who she was in a previous life.

Crandall just stares at him deadpan.

MICHAEL (continuing)
It doesn't surprise you?

CRANDALL
Nothing Elizabeth does surprises me.

MICHAEL
Elizabeth?

CRANDALL
Jody's just a nickname. Her baptismal name was Elizabeth. She was a strange child with an overactive imagination. Perhaps she still is.

MICHAEL
What do you mean?

CRANDALL
I mean she lied all the time, about the smallest and the biggest things. I wanted her to see a child psychologist but my wife wouldn't hear of it. I'm afraid I haven't seen Elizabeth much through the years, although she has a sizable trust fund, of course. I'm afraid in some ways she's ancient history -- that was my second marriage, I'm now on my fifth.

MICHAEL
She's still your daughter.

CRANDALL
Of course she is. I always remember her birthday.

MICHAEL (smiles)
You mean your secretary remembers her birthday.

CRANDALL (after a beat)
I don't have a secretary, Mr. Carey. I have a staff of male assistants. They remember her birthday.

They look at each other a beat.

CRANDALL (continuing)
Will there be anything else, Mr. Carey?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
You just don't care, do you?

Crandall looks at him a long beat -- the Assistant who escorted Michael in suddenly opens the door.

THE ASSISTANT
May I show you the way out, sir?

MICHAEL (looking at Crandall)
I'd like that very much.

A beat, and he goes.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

It is a fancy high-rise on Wilshire Boulevard. He is in bed -- the decor is cold, deco: lots of chrome and glass. He is reading a book. We see the front and back covers as he holds it. "The Book of Lives" by Harlan Jarrell. Jarrell's photograph shows a full-bearded man in his 50's with a shaved head. He puts the book down and stares a beat. He turns to the telephone, picks it up, looks at a piece of paper, dials.

MICHAEL
Hi.

INT. AN APARTMENT IN NEW YORK - NIGHT

It is off Washington Square. It is furnished with African masks and ritualistic objects. Jody is on the phone. She is in bed. She has been asleep. INTERCUT.

JODY
It's late, Michael.

MICHAEL
How did you know it was me?

JODY
Because I knew you in a past life.

MICHAEL
Me too? What is this, a virus that's going around? Now I've got it?

JODY
I didn't want to tell you. I thought I'd hold it back.

MICHAEL
Are you serious? God, I'm almost afraid to ask you that.

JODY
I don't know. When I first saw you on TV, I thought somehow I knew you.

MICHAEL
Does that happen to you with everybody you see on TV?

JODY (laughs)
Only you and President Clinton.

MICHAEL
What were you doing with President Clinton? Forget it, I'm sorry I asked. How was your flight?

JODY
I slept all the way.

MICHAEL
What are you doing?

JODY
What do you think I'm doing, Michael? It's two o'clock in the morning. I'm sleeping.

MICHAEL (smiles)
You must've done something to tire yourself out.

JODY
Like Mrs. Phillips.

MICHAEL (laughs)
What? Oh yeah, right, Mrs. Phillips. What a horrible image. I saw your father.

JODY
What did he say?

MICHAEL
He said you were a nutbag. Did he ever sexually molest you when you were a child?

JODY
What? My father? What is wrong with you?

MICHAEL
It'd make a great show. We've never done a tycoon molestation before.

JODY
You know what would make a great show.

MICHAEL
He said you lie all the time.

JODY
I don't lie all the time. I just lie some of the time like most people.

MICHAEL
What if I do it -- what if I put you on the show -- what do I get out of it?

JODY
Ratings -- that's all you care about.

MICHAEL (smiles)
That's it?

JODY
Are you trying to negotiate a deal? I already tendered my first offer.

MICHAEL
It wasn't so tender. Why didn't you tell me your name is Elizabeth?

JODY
I told you Ethan calls me that.

MICHAEL
Your father calls you that, too. So do the IRS and the DMV. Big deal.

JODY
You already said I'm crazy, Michael. I didn't want it to complicate everything.

MICHAEL
You are crazy. You have to be to believe in this stuff.

JODY
Go study your ratings, Michael. You believe in your ratings, don't you?

MICHAEL (smiles)
You're beginning to annoy me.

JODY (smiles)
Did you hear Donahue retired? You don't have much time left, Michael.

MICHAEL
I liked your father very much. He's really a sweet man.

JODY (smiles)
Just like you.

She hangs up. A beat, as he hangs up the phone. He smiles slowly.

INT. EBS EXECUTIVE OFFICES - DAY

He comes into Nelson Wyland's waiting room; Wyland is the head of programming. The office is plush, filled with posters of successful TV shows from the past. Sam is already there.

As soon as Michael comes in --

THE SECRETARY
You can go right in.

SAM (quietly)
Are you ready for this?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Yeah, I think so.

SAM
No you're not.

INT. WYLAND'S OFFICE - DAY

Wyland is behind the big desk. He is surprisingly young -- he is in his late 20's. He looks like an exhausted yuppie. With him are ARTHUR SIMMS, business affairs, a quiet man in his 50's, and SAL DeSANTIS, the head of marketing and research, in his 40's, an old-style executive.

Michael and Sam walk in.

MICHAEL (a showbiz grin)
Morning, guys.

NELSON
Fuck you. Sit down. I don't want to hear any of your lame chit chat. Your contract's up next month. Goodbye.

Michael and Sam stare at him a beat.

SAM
You said you'd pick up our option --

NELSON
Fuck the option. Fuck what I told you. Fuck you. Sal!

SAL (looks at printout)
Atlanta, down four -- Miami, down five -- Phoenix, down eight, New York, down --

SAM
You knew when we started a year ago -- he's got a different appeal, he's smarter than Springer --

NELSON (hard)
Fuck Springer! I don't want to hear that he's smart. I want to hear that he's down market! I want his audience to stomp their feet! I want 'em chanting "Go, Michael! Go, Michael! Go, Michael!"

SAM
We're putting penile transplants on!

NELSON
You think this country cares about tired dicks? I want headlines -- like that Jenny Jones guy who shot his gay lover! Like Geraldo going to Bosnia --

SAM
He took his ratings with him!

NELSON
I want headlines! Donahue's gone, Arsenio's gone, Donny's gone, Carnie's gone, Gabrielle's gone, Stephanie Miller's gone, Mike and Maty are gone:
(a beat, then to Michael)
You're fuckin gone. You're outa here!

He and Michael look at each other a long beat.

MICHAEL (quietly, to Sam)
He's right.

NELSON
I'm always right!

He looks at Michael warily.

MICHAEL (quietly)
I know how to get your headlines.

They look at him a long beat, Rita Abrams comes into the room.

RITA
I'm sorry I'm late. What's happening?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
We're getting fired.

RITA
Good. That's the best thing that could happen to us.

INT. NELSON'S OFFICE - LATER

They are all looking at Michael. A long beat, then --

SAL
Reincarnation's been done.

MICHAEL
Not like this.

RITA (upset)
You don't believe in any of this! You're going to make an idiot out of yourself!

SAM
He is an idiot. He does a talk show. We're idiots, too. We work with him.

NELSON (grins)
I don't give a fuck what he believes in. What does that have to do with anything? You're being the idiot, Rita.

A pause -- Nelson is thinking about something.

ARTHUR
Is this young woman telling the truth?

NELSON
Truth?
(he laughs)
We're talking about coming back from the dead here!
(a beat)
You can't prove this cockamamie stuff one way or the other.
(a beat)
Check her out. Have a shrink look at her. Give her a lie test. Authenticate her.

RITA
Authenticate her? How are you going to authenticate reincarnation?

NELSON (after a beat, quietly)
Easy.
(he smiles)
I'm a Catholic. Have you ever heard of the Immaculate Conception? How's that for authentic?

SAL
What if the experts don't tell us what we want to hear?

NELSON
Then we hire some who will tell us what we want to hear. It's like hiring an academic in a court case.

RITA (upset)
It's a fraud on the American public!

NELSON
The American public wants to be defrauded. Look at the $64,000 Question, look at wrestling, look at Howard Stern's Pay Per View. Look at the ratings on those things!

ARTHUR (after a beat)
It makes me nervous. It can blow up in our faces.

NELSON (smiles)
It's not gonna be my ass, it's gonna be his.

He indicates Michael; Rita looks upset.

SAM (to Michael)
We can angle it. She wants to find this guy -- Ethan. This is a love story.

NELSON (grins)
I got it. Poor Little Rich Girl Trying To Find Love. Across centuries! Wow!
(a beat, then quietly)
We'll run it in prime time.

INT. THE CORRIDOR - DAY

Michael, Sam, and Rita, come out of Nelson's office. Michael goes to a water fountain, takes a deep drink.

RITA (quietly)
Do you know what you're doing? If the media nails you for this, you and O.J. will be selling videotapes together.

SAM
They're not going to nail him.

RITA (to Michael)
You went to bed with her, didn't you?

SAM
Hey, hey, hey, what is this?

MICHAEL (smiles)
Why would you think that?

RITA
Because somebody... fucked your brains out, Michael.

SAM (to Rita)
You know what that is? Cynical. Really cynical. Give me something positive, give me some life force.

Rita gives Sam an ugly look.

MICHAEL (to Rita)
What if she's telling the truth?

Rita looks at him a long beat.

RITA (quietly)
Don't you even start that with me. How long have we been together? Ten years?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
In this life.

They look at each other a beat and then he turns away from them and keeps walking. There is a smile on his face.

SAM (to Rita)
Come on, did you see our ratings? Give him a break.

RITA (hard)
No! You may not care about him, but I do.

Sam almost steps back from her.

SAM
I love him like my own son, Rita.

RITA
I'm so glad you don't have any children.

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Michael with Sam, Rita Rivera, three or four other staffers, including Debbie. They look tired. They've all got notepads.

MICHAEL
What about Harlan Jarrell?

RITA (with distaste)
We're still checking.

MICHAEL
I want to dig into Newport Beach -- let's find out how she grew up, who she knew. I want to know everything about her. I want them to talk to the kids she went to kindergarten with.

RITA
I told you, Michael, we're finding the best people. I will make it very clear to you that she's a phony.

SAM
You're not being objective about this!

RITA
And I suppose you are?

SAM
Damn right I am -- I have an open mind. There's lots of stuff we don't know anything about out there. It's what keeps me young.

RITA (with distaste)
Young? You?

Sam gives her an ugly look. A woman staffer walks in.

THE WOMAN
Harlan Jarrell was lost at sea with six others off the coast of Malaysia ten years ago.

MICHAEL
Damn! We've got to find the best reincarnation guy, the best there is!

THE WOMAN
We've got her.

SAM (suspiciously)
Her?

THE WOMAN
Her.

Sam doesn't like it -- Rita smiles.

THE WOMAN (looks at notes)
Amanda Karan -- Dr. Amanda Karan -- she was Jarrell's assistant.

SAM (suspiciously)
What's she a doctor of?

THE WOMAN (looks at notes)
Psychiatry. She's the head of staff at UCLA.

MICHAEL (grins)
I love it. She believes in it and she's got psychiatric credentials -- how does that sound to you, Rita?

Rita looks at him a beat, shakes her head.

SAM (a hidden smile)
Whatsamatter, Rita? You're a feminist, aren't you?

INT. UCLA MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Michael walks down a corridor of the hospital, sees a door with Dr. Amanda Karan written on it.

He opens the door. It is a reception area; there is no one there.

He sees a door to an inner office open. Sitting behind the desk in the inner office, her back to Michael, is a woman in her late 30's. She has an odd, offbeat, almost spooky kind of beauty. She wears very simple, Chinese clothing.

She turns to Michael.

MICHAEL
Excuse me. I'm looking for Dr. Karan.

THE WOMAN
I'm Dr. Karan.

Michael looks at her -- he sees, behind the desk, a framed photograph of Harlan Jarrell -- the man with the shaved head and the full beard we saw on the book cover.

MICHAEL (smiles)
You don't look like I thought you'd look.

AMANDA
What did you expect? A cape and a ouija board?

MICHAEL
Glasses and a dark suit.

AMANDA (after a beat, smiles)
Never. Not even in a previous life.

Michael smiles.

INT. THE CAFETERIA - UCLA

They are going through the cafeteria, picking things out.

AMANDA
I was eighteen when I met Harlan. I was with him ten years. I was pretty well burned out on it when he died.

MICHAEL
What burned you out?

AMANDA
Too much time spent out in the either.
(she smiles)
Too many cases that turned out to be subconscious fantasies, sexual frustrations, imagination, lies, worse.

MICHAEL (smiles)
What's worse than all of that?

AMANDA (after a beat)
Death wish. People wanting to kill themselves and sometimes pulling others into it.

They look at each other a beat.

INT. THE CAFETERIA - UCLA - LATER

They are eating in the brightly lighted, antiseptic room. In the room, facing Michael, far away, so that we can barely hear the sound, is a TV set. Jerry Springer is on the TV.

MICHAEL
You don't believe in it anymore?

He glances at Springer on the set -- Springer is carrying on -- then away, back at Dr. Karan.

AMANDA
Is it important that I believe in it?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
No. I was just curious.

AMANDA
Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. I'm a psychiatrist, thank God, not a meta-psychologist.

MICHAEL (smiles)
A meta-what? Is that what Harlan Jarrell was?

AMANDA
I don't know what it is you want, but I know you don't know the turf. I'll tell you about the turf, if you hold back with the smiles, okay?

MICHAEL (after a beat, seriously)
Okay.

AMANDA (assesses him a beat, then)
Harlan had a gift. He could diagnose physical illnesses that medical science couldn't. I was there. I saw him do it. I saw him save lives. Do you believe that?

Michael looks at her a long beat -- she assesses him.

MICHAEL
Sure.

AMANDA (after a beat)
No you don't. You're condescending me. Fine -- I'll condescend you, I'll tell you the rest of it.
(a beat)
Then -- when Harlen got into reading past lives -- it got out of hand.

MICHAEL
How did it get out of hand?

AMANDA
You really hate this stuff, don't you?

MICHAEL
I... just come from a different discipline, that's all.

AMANDA
What discipline? Condescending, patronizing, humoring, skewering people on your show? I've seen your show.

MICHAEL (smiles)
Skewering is strong, isn't it?

AMANDA (after a beat)
Maybe.
(a beat)
It got out of hand because we had people coming from all over the world. They thought Harlan was God. I think there were times he thought he was God.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
He thought he was God? And he was sane?

AMANDA
Sane? I don't know what that means. Are you sane?

He looks at her.

EXT. UCLA - LATER

He is walking with her toward the parking lot.

AMANDA
He'd read them. He sat with them. He looked inside them. He put his hands on them.

MICHAEL (after a beat, grins)
Come on.
(a beat)
I'm sorry. I just have to smile.

AMANDA (smiles)
I know how it sounds.
(a beat)
But I saw him do the same thing with the physically ill.

MICHAEL
He cured people like Jesus in the Bible, is that what you're telling me?

He grins.

AMANDA
Harlan didn't want to hurt anybody. Sometimes he didn't tell them what he'd read. He'd tell me. He'd say they were caught in a karmic circle, paying for something that happened hundreds of years ago.

MICHAEL
Dr. Karan, with all due respect...

He starts to laugh. The laugh stops after a beat.

MICHAEL
Didn't he ever hear of free will?

AMANDA (after a beat)
What's that?

They look at each other a long beat -- he shakes his head.

AMANDA
So how can I help you?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
I'm not sure you can.

AMANDA
I didn't tell you what you wanted to hear?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
No, you told me exactly what I wanted to hear... I guess.

AMANDA
Is this personal with you?

MICHAEL (taken aback)
Personal? No.

She looks at him.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He sits at his dining room table, surrounded by books several of them by Harlan Jarrell.

He reaches for the phone, dials.

MICHAEL
What's it like in New York?

INT. JODY'S APARTMENT IN NEW YORK - DAY

She sits at her work table, watching the snow falling outside -- the apartment looks onto Washington Square. INTERCUT.

JODY
It's ugly. It's grim. It's New York.

MICHAEL
Do you feel like some sunny weather?

JODY (casually)
Sure.

MICHAEL (after a beat, smiles)
Were you that sure I'd agree?

JODY
I knew you'd consider your self-interest.

MICHAEL
Would you like to stay with me instead of the Bel-Aire?

JODY
What if I'm crazy. Wouldn't you be in danger?

MICHAEL
You're using me.

JODY (smiles)
You like the way I'm using you, don't you?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Yes.

INT. HER APARTMENT IN NEW YORK - NIGHT

She has hung the phone up. She is staring at the snow falling, at Washington Square.

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - DAY

Michael, Sam, Rita, Debbie, and some of the other staffers. Sam has a file in front of him. So does Rita.

SAM
Her real name is Elizabeth.

MICHAEL
Yeah, I know.

RITA
That doesn't bother you?

MICHAEL (smiles)
Why should it bother me?

SAM
It doesn't bother me, either. It's a nice name.

Rita looks at him like she could hit him.

RITA (to Michael)
Maybe this will bother you. When she was eighteen, she had a nervous breakdown. She spent six months at a private psychiatric clinic. She got out: get this: she worked as a waitress at a bus stop. Are you listening to me, Michael? She's got a trust fund of fifty million dollars and she goes to work as a waitress? She's not a phony, Michael, she's a lunatic.

SAM
Why? Because she shows initiative?

MICHAEL (hiding a smile)
What did she do then?

RITA
She went to Stanford, American history major, specializing in Afro-American studies and the late 19th century. Summa cum laude. Columbia for her master's and P.H.d.

MICHAEL
What about relationships?

RITA
None.

SAM (grins)
None? With her looks?
(a beat)
Even you've got relationships, Rita. I even took you out once.

RITA
To my everlasting regret.
(to Michael)
She lives alone. She teaches her courses.
(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)
For the past three years she's seen every para-psychologist, meta-psychologist, and hypno-regressor on the East Coast. Michael, please. She's damaged. The nervous breakdown itself is enough to destroy any credibility.

SAM
I disagree. A lot of people have nervous breakdowns, so what. We live in a humane, forgiving society. You really ought to show some compassion, Rita.

RITA
You call what we're doing compassion? We're exploiting her mental condition. You're exploiting her, Michael.

Sam rolls his eyes in frustration.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Well, Rita, the name of the show isn't the Mother Teresa Hour.

She looks at him a long beat... Sam starts to laugh.

INT. LAX - NIGHT

He waits for her at the gate. She comes out. She looks terrific. She goes up to him slowly.

MICHAEL
Hi.

JODY
Hi.

MICHAEL
Are you hungry? Would you like something to eat?

She shakes her head, looks at him. They stand close to each other, their eyes on each other.

MICHAEL
Are you tired?

JODY (a slight smile)
No. Are you? Have you been with some of your other guests?

A beat, and he shakes his head.

JODY (in a whisper)
Good.

She kisses him softly on the lips.

INT. HIS APARTMENT - NIGHT

They are in the bedroom. The room is dark. She is wearing her bra and panties -- he kisses her.

He pulls her close to him. She kisses him on the ear.

JODY (in a whisper)
I want you... David.

He hesitates a split-second. What did she call him? He starts to kiss her neck.

INT. HIS APARTMENT - DAWN

She stands at the window in a robe, watching the sun rise over L.A. He is watching her from the bed.

MICHAEL
Who's David?

JODY (after a beat)
I don't know any David.

She looks out the window, doesn't look at him.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Are you telling me the truth?

JODY
Does it matter if I'm telling you the truth? You don't care about the truth, Michael, you care about the show.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
I... care about you.

We see a soft smile on her face. She turns to him.

JODY
I <u>always</u> tell the truth.

She looks away from him, out the window.

JODY
I used to lie all the time when I was a little girl. My father would get so pissed at me.
(a beat)
I was so weird. I played the piano when I was two. They thought I was a child prodigy.

A beat, as she looks out, then looks back at him.

JODY
Do you tell the truth?

MICHAEL
I always tell the truth, too.

He smiles slightly. They look at each other.

MICHAEL
I missed you, Jody.

JODY (a slight smile)
That's truth, huh?

MICHAEL
That's truth.

They look at each other a long beat.

JODY
Be careful, Michael.

She looks out the window again.

JODY
I'm Ethan's girl.

He looks at her a beat.

MICHAEL
Maybe you'll betray him.

That has a ring to it. She looks back at him, sees the slight smile on his face.

JODY (evenly)
Never.

They look at each other.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - EBS - DAY

Michael walks in with Jody -- Amanda Karan and Sam are already sitting there.

Amanda Karan wears a very professional business suit.

As soon as they walk in -- Amanda gets up.

AMANDA
Hi. I'm Dr. Karan. It's nice to meet you.

She shakes hands with Jody, looks at her closely.

MICHAEL
You know Sam Abrams, my producer.

JODY
Hi.

She looks fresh, bright-eyed this morning.

JODY (to Amanda)
You're a psychiatrist, aren't you?

AMANDA (smiles)
I try not to be so obvious about it.

JODY (smiles)
It's okay. I like psychiatrists.

AMANDA (smiles)
Good.

They sit down.

MICHAEL (to Dr. Karan)
How do you want to do this?

AMANDA (to Jody)
I'm going to ask you about Ethan and Elizabeth. I'm going to ask you about Jody. Michael and Sam would like to observe. I'd like to use a videotape. Is that okay with you?

JODY (smiles)
I don't have any secrets.

She glances at Michael a beat. Dr. Karan watches her, sees the glance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

AMANDA
Epilepsy?

JODY
No.

AMANDA
LSD?

JODY
No.

AMANDA
Peyote?

JODY
No.

AMANDA
Opium?

JODY
No.

AMANDA
Hashish?

JODY
I haven't even smoked any grass. I don't like drugs.

AMANDA
Did you ever have a concussion?

JODY
No.

AMANDA
Cerebral hemorrhage?

JODY
No.

AMANDA
Are you taking any medication?

JODY
No.

AMANDA
Is there a history of mental illness in your family?

JODY (after a beat)
Yes.
(a beat)
My father's obsession with money.

They smile.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

A video camera has been set up.

AMANDA
Tell me about your nervous breakdown.

JODY
It was ten years ago. My mom died. I just couldn't handle it. We were close.

AMANDA
What did she die of?

JODY (with difficulty)
We were playing tennis. She fell down. She had a blood clot.

AMANDA (after a beat, quietly)
Did you feel responsible for her death?

JODY (after a long beat)
I did then. I don't anymore.

AMANDA (after a beat)
What were your manifestations?

JODY (smiles)
I couldn't talk. I stayed in the house for a month. I couldn't go outside.

Michael watches her intensely.

AMANDA
What did you do in the house?

JODY (after a beat, smiles)
I mostly watched TV.

AMANDA
What did you watch?

JODY
Anything. Everything.
(she smiles)
Mostly talk shows.

Michael stares at her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

AMANDA
When did the flashes begin?

JODY (after a beat)
Three years ago.

AMANDA
What are the flashes like?

JODY
Like deja vu -- it feels like that, but it's different.

AMANDA
Do they frighten you?

JODY
Not the first time. Ethan and I were in a big room. We were dancing.

AMANDA
Which flashes frighten you?

JODY (after a beat, with difficulty)
I see a knife. It's gleaming. It's up in the air. It's got a bone handle.

AMANDA
How do you feel when you see it?

JODY (after a beat)
I'm scared... I'm excited, too.

AMANDA
Turned on?

JODY (after a beat)
Yes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

JODY (smiles)
It's a big dance, lots of people, a waltz, a huge fireplace. Ethan says: "Tell me that you love me." I say to him: "I love you." I feel... warm... good.

AMANDA
How are you dressed?

JODY
Like they dressed in the late 19th century.

AMANDA
How do you know?

JODY
It's the time of my thesis. I studied it.

AMANDA
But you studied it before you started having the flashes.

JODY
Yes. I recognized the dress from my studies when I started having the flashes.

AMANDA
Tell me about the yellow room.

Jody stares at her a long beat in almost horror. She shakes her head a little, looks away. Dr. Karan looks at her.

She puts her hand on Jody's.

AMANDA (quietly)
Please.

Jody stares at her.

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

The corridor is empty. Amanda is on her way to the elevator.

MICHAEL (behind her)
Dr. Karan!

She stops, looks at him, lost in her thoughts.

MICHAEL
So what do you think?

AMANDA (after a beat)
Are you sleeping with her?

MICHAEL (taken aback)
Is that relevant?

AMANDA
Yes.

They look at each other.

AMANDA
Are there any marks on her body?

Michael stares at her a long beat.

MICHAEL
She's got a... birthmark.

AMANDA
Where?

Michael stares at her.

MICHAEL
Near her... navel.

AMANDA (after a beat)
Does it look like a stab wound?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
It's a birthmark.

They stare at each other a beat.

AMANDA
Get her home. She needs rest.

She turns from him and gets on the elevator. He stands there.

INT. THE CORRIDOR

As he walks back toward the conference room -- Sam is standing outside; the door to the room is open. Michael looks in. She has her head down on the table. She is asleep.

SAM
She just put her head down and started to snore.

MICHAEL
She doesn't snore.

SAM (smiles)
You know better than I do.

Michael watches her through the door.

MICHAEL
What do you think?

SAM (after a beat, smiles)
What do I think? I think we've got everything we need to put her on the show.

Michael looks at him.

SAM
Don't you?

A beat, and Michael nods, then looks back at her and watches her sleep.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He walks in, carrying her. He is having a hard time.

He takes her into the bedroom and puts her down on the bed; she is dead asleep.

He takes a long look at her. She curls up like a baby in the fetal position.

INT. HIS APARTMENT - MORNING

She is in the kitchen, cooking eggs -- she wears one of his robes. Michael comes out, looks bleary-eyed.

MICHAEL
What time is it?

JODY (smiles)
Do you like eggs benedict? I'm famished!

She looks very young -- very girlish.

MICHAEL
She can cook, too. Unbelievable.
(he takes a step)
Ouch.

He holds his back.

JODY
What'd you do to your back?

MICHAEL
It's not what I did to my back, it's what you did to my back.

JODY
I don't remember -- was it fun?

She smiles. She keeps working on the eggs.

MICHAEL
If you're into carrying people around in your arms it was fun.

JODY
You carried me around in your arms? How romantic.

She turns to him and smiles a very girlish smile. The phone rings. He picks it up.

MICHAEL
Hello.

INT. EBS CENTER

Sam is on the phone.

SAM
She lived with a guy at Stanford when she was an under-graduate. He's a stockbroker here. Collins. David Collins. You wanna talk to him?

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT

MICHAEL (after a long beat)
Yes.

He hangs up, looks at her working on the eggs a long beat.

JODY
Was that part of the foreplay?

Her back is to him. Michael stares at her.

MICHAEL (preoccupied)
What?

She turns to him, smiles.

JODY
Carrying me around in your arms.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
That was it.

He stares at her. She turns back to the eggs.

JODY (cooing)
Awww. Poor Michael.

He stares at her as she works on the eggs.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - DAY

An impeccably dressed BLACK MAN in his early 30's stands by a bench, looking at the water. Michael goes up to him.

MICHAEL
David Collins?

The man looks him over, recognizes him.

COLLINS
I can't tell you anything about Jody. I haven't seen her in eight years. How's she doin?

MICHAEL
She's at Columbia. She's teaching.

They walk along the water.

COLLINS (smiles)
That figures.

MICHAEL
Why did you break up?

COLLINS
What are you gonna do, put her love life on your TV show?

MICHAEL
No.

COLLINS (smiles)
Don't you ever get tired of doing that shit?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
It pays the bills.

Collins looks at him, nods.

COLLINS (after a beat)
She was too weird for me, man. I couldn't keep up with her. Truth is, she scared me. Driving that little sports car a hundred miles an hour.
(a beat; he shakes his head)
One night I woke up, she was sitting on the side of the bed holding this knife with a bone handle, staring at it. She was spooky, man. I almost thought she had like a... death wish.

Michael stares at him.

INT. AMANDA'S OFFICE - UCLA - NIGHT

Amanda Karan sits in the office, staring at a wall. Only a small light is on. Michael comes in, looks at her.

MICHAEL
Bad day at the office?

Amanda turns, looks at him a beat, deadpan, then smiles.

AMANDA
She's next door, she'll be right in.

Amanda stares -- Michael looks at her. A long beat.

MICHAEL
What happened?

AMANDA (quietly)
I tried to hypnotize her. I couldn't. I gave her some pentothal. It didn't do any good. I gave her the polygraph. She flunked it.

MICHAEL (in disbelief)
She flunked it?

AMANDA
It showed she was lying when she was telling the truth. She was lying when she gave her age. She was lying when she gave her name. She was lying when she said she slept with you.

MICHAEL (after a long beat)
What are you talking about -- split personality?

AMANDA (after a beat)
No.

Their eyes are on each other.

MICHAEL
Multiple personalities?

AMANDA (after a beat)
No.

They stare at each other a long beat.

AMANDA
Harlan told me about a case once. A young woman. Someone drowned her... in a previous life. She couldn't be hypnotized. She flunked her polygraph. She had flashes of her drowning.

A long beat.

MICHAEL
What happened to her?

AMANDA (after a beat, smiles)
In <u>this</u> life?
(a beat)
Someone drowned her.

They look at each other a long beat.

MICHAEL (evenly)
Bullshit.

AMANDA
They're trapped in repetitive cycles if there's a dark entity that holds them together.

MICHAEL (scoffing)
What are you talking about -- a demon?

AMANDA (after a beat)
A catalyst. I prefer to call it a catalyst.

They look at each other a long beat.

AMANDA (quietly)
The cycle can't be broken.

MICHAEL (after a beat, hard)
Come on, you're too smart for this stuff. It's the biggest copout in the world. We're not responsible for our own actions?

AMANDA (after a long beat)
Harlan used to say to me: If the possible and the probable don't explain it, then accept the improbable and the impossible.

They look at each other. Jody is suddenly behind Michael. They look at her a long beat. She doesn't understand their looks.

She has two charcoal drawings in her hands -- she hands them to Michael.

Move in closer: One is a drawing of Elizabeth, the other a drawing of Ethan.

Widen: Michael stares at the drawing of Elizabeth, then looks at Jody.

JODY (indicating drawing)
I think I look nice, don't you?

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She stands at the big window overlooking L.A. There are no lights on. She has a drink in her hand, her face pressed against the glass. He watches her from a couch in the darkness.

MICHAEL (quietly)
I thought you didn't know a David.

She says nothing, stares outside.

MICHAEL
How about David Collins?

JODY (quietly)
Sure, I knew him. It was almost ten years ago.

MICHAEL
He says he woke up in the middle of the night and saw you holding this bone-handled knife.

She looks at him.

JODY
He did? I don't remember that.

She turns away, looks out at the city again.

MICHAEL
Why did you break up with him?

JODY
We were sexually incompatible. I wasn't interested in sex.

She doesn't look at him.

MICHAEL
When did you get interested in sex?

JODY
When I started having the flashes. When I met Ethan... again.

She looks back at him now. They look at each other a long beat.

MICHAEL
When we do the show, I'm going to ask you about the yellow room.

She looks away from him out the window again.

MICHAEL
I don't want you to say anything about the knife. We'll give someone watching a chance to tell us about it.

JODY
We don't have to play games, I'll know Ethan when I see him.

She turns from him again, looks out the window.

JODY
Do you believe me now?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
No.

She looks at him a beat, then away again.

MICHAEL
I believe you believe what you tell me.

A long beat as she looks out the window, then --

JODY
I feel sorry for you, Michael.

INT. EBS STUDIO - NIGHT

A simple set. Michael sits next to Jody on a director's chair. Behind them are blow-ups of the drawings of Elizabeth and Ethan.

MICHAEL (on air)
Good evening. We're bringing you a special program tonight. It is probably the most remarkable story you've ever heard. With me is a young woman, the daughter of one of the richest men in America.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Nelson Wyland is there with Arthur Simms, Sal DeSantis, Sam, Rita -- a bunch of assistants. They are watching the monitors. Amanda Karan is standing a little apart from them, watching another monitor. The room is pin-drop silent.

MICHAEL (on air)
Jody Crandall is a university professor. We have asked one of the most respected psychiatrists in America, Dr. Amanda Karan of the UCLA School of Medicine, to examine her. Dr. Karan is convinced that she is telling the truth.

Nelson Wyland smiles.

INT. THE STUDIO

MICHAEL (on air)
Her story is this: She was in love with a man in a previous life. She is trying to find him in this one.

INT. THE STUDIO - LATER

JODY (haltingly)
-- When we're dancing, I feel how much I love him. I know he loves me. It's the greatest feeling I've ever had. I feel so... warm... and then sometimes ... I get flashes of... a yellow room.

MICHAEL (gently)
What happens in the yellow room?

JODY (after a beat, haltingly)
I don't know. I just see flashes of it. Ethan is there. His back is to me. He turns to me. I don't know. There are curtains that billow in the wind. Dogs keep barking. The curtains go on fire. I don't know -- it's scattered. I can't quite see it. I love Ethan, but I'm frightened, too. There's blood on a wall. I don't know.

MICHAEL (after a long beat)
If you meet Ethan... in this life... how will you know that it's him?

JODY
I'll <u>know</u>.
(after a beat, a shy smile)
I'll know right away. I will.

Michael stares at her a beat.

INT. THE CONTROL ROOM

Wyland and the others watching her.

NELSON
That's the best goddamn performance I've ever seen. She doesn't even <u>look</u> like she's acting.

Dr. Karan looks at him.

INT. THE STUDIO - LATER

MICHAEL (on air)
If you can help Elizabeth find Ethan... if you can help her discover what happened in the yellow room... if you can help Jody Crandall put together the puzzles of her life... EBS will give you a reward of a hundred thousand dollars. It's up to you. Only you can help her. Thank you. And good night.

A beat, and Michael breathes a sign of relief.

JODY
Are we off?

MICHAEL
Yes.

JODY (quietly)
Thank you.

Their eyes are on each other. And then the studio doors swing open and Nelson Wyland comes in with Arthur, Sal, Sam, Rita, and the others.

NELSON (loud)
If we find this fucker, we're gonna get bigger ratings than the Super Bowl!

SAM
What about our option?

NELSON
You've got your option -- Jesus Christ!

We follow his look. Jody is shaking -- she tries to get up, can't -- she is shaking so badly it's almost like some kind of seizure. Michael puts his arms around her -- Dr. Karan comes running in. Jody starts to cry -- it is almost like a low keen, a soft moan. They start to lower her to the floor.

RITA (yelling)
Somebody get an ambulance!

AMANDA (quietly)
Don't. It's normal.

NELSON
Normal? What the fuck do you mean it's normal? I've got a star here, I'm not gonna lose her! Call 911!

AMANDA
It happens in these cases.

Michael looks at Amanda as he holds Jody and as Jody moans against him.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They are in bed, fully clothed. The room is dark. She is pressed against him. He has his arm around her. She looks asleep. He is awake.

JODY (whispering)
I love you.

He looks at her.

INT. EBS STUDIOS - DAWN

SAM (on phone)
Michael, you better get down here right away.

There are lots of people around him.

INT. EBS BUILDING - THE LOBBY - MORNING

Michael and Jody come into the lobby from the back stairway. As they get to the lobby, they see a squad of security guards in front of the glass doors. They are being besieged by TV cameras and reporters. The cameras and reporters surge toward the door when they see Michael and Jody inside.

INT. EBS - THE CORRIDOR - MORNING

They come out of the elevator. The corridor is jammed with people. Sam is there as soon as they get off.

SAM
It's ape-shit, kid! There's media from all over the world down there. The telephone system is so overloaded that A T and T is putting in extra lines.

They walk down the corridor. Jody looks dazed. Rita joins them.

RITA
I didn't know there could possibly be that many crazy people out there.

MICHAEL
It's the reward. They want the money.

Jody looks at him.

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE

They walk in. Nelson Wyland is sitting behind Michael's desk.

NELSON (excited)
Did you see the papers?

Michael glances at the papers on the desk. Headlines say: TYCOON'S DAUGHTER SEEKS HER DEAD LOVER... ELIZABETH WANTS ETHAN... JODY'S ELIZABETH BUT WHERE'S ETHAN?

NELSON (to Michael)
Springer! Fucking Jerry Springer wants to put <u>you</u> on his show. Can you believe that? He knows he can't get <u>her</u> -- he wants to put <u>you</u> on.

MICHAEL (to Sam)
Have you got it?

Sam nods.

NELSON
Got what?

Sam puts a small cassette recorder on the desk, hits the button. We hear a man's voice with a Southern twang.

THE MAN'S VOICE
Hello? Hey, uh -- listen, my name's Billy Moran. I'm callin from Grand Isle, Louisiana? I'm callin about the reward, okay?
(MORE)

THE MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Couple years ago, I started seein these... like, flashes? This woman named Elizabeth and she was calling me this weird name, Ethan. There was this yella room. It's like it don't fit together, but I seen these curtains blowin, you know?

We see Jody's face as she listens.

THE MAN'S VOICE
-- And there was this knife, you know? Up in the air -- like...it's gleamin up there.

Jody closes her eyes and stands there a long beat.

THE MAN'S VOICE
You said there's a reward, call me, my number --

Sam shuts the tape off. Everyone looks at each other a long beat -- Jody opens her eyes.

SAM
It came in on the voice mail about an hour after we aired.

A long beat, then --

NELSON (excited)
That's Ethan! She didn't say anything about the knife.

MICHAEL (suddenly)
He's a hype. He's gotta be. All he talks about is the reward. He made up a detail. He got lucky.

NELSON
Lucky? He's even got it gleaming in the air!

MICHAEL
I'm going down there.

JODY
I'm coming with you.

MICHAEL
No!
(a beat, he looks at her)
It's gotta be a scam!

JODY (quietly)
You know it isn't, Michael.

NELSON (hard)
You're damn right it isn't!
(to Michael)
What are you trying to do -- blow us the biggest ratings before the Second Coming?

RITA
Maybe they read the same book or saw the same movie or something.

NELSON (hard)
Whose side are you on anyway? What is wrong with you?

SAM (to Nelson)
If the guy's real, we'll bring him back.

NELSON
Take the company plane, it's at Burbank.

MICHAEL (to Rita)
Call Dr. Karan -- have her meet us at the airport.

Jody just stands there -- we see tears welling in her eyes.

RITA (suddenly, decisively)
Call her yourself, I'm out of here.

She starts to walk out of the office.

NELSON
Fine. Do it. Good fucking riddance.

Michael follows Rita out of the office.

INT. THE CORRIDOR

Rita is walking quickly away, Michael after her.

MICHAEL
Rita!

He catches up to her -- she is very angry.

MICHAEL
Rita, come on. It's just a show. Is it any worse than "My mama says I dress like a ho"?

RITA
I'm sick of it, Michael! Sick of it! What happened to you? Remember the stories we did at PBS? Remember the capital punishment piece from the prison? I thought you'd win Peabodys, Michael! I thought we'd wind up at Sixty Minutes!

MICHAEL
It's not my fault that television changed.

RITA (after a beat, a wry smile)
PBS is still on the air, so is Sixty Minutes. They're still awarding Peabodys to other people.

They look at each other a beat -- Rita sees that Jody is behind them and has been listening to them. Michael follows her look, sees Jody behind them.

RITA (to Michael)
If you really cared about her, you'd get her to a real psychiatrist.
(a beat)
See you at the Peabodys, huh, Michael?

She walks away.

JODY
Please let me come with you.

MICHAEL (after a beat, quietly)
Trust me.

INT. A LIMOUSINE - DUSK

Michael, Sam, and Amanda Karan are in the back. The driver keeps glancing at them in the mirror. They are driving the road that leads down to the tip of the Bayou, to the peninsula that is Grand Isle. Oil derricks are out in the Gulf; they pass mountains of rubber tires. The houses are up on stilts.

We see marsh and street signs that are filled with shotgun holes.

Michael stares outside, he's lost in his thoughts.

SAM
I did a story down here when I was with Walter Cronkite. This is Cajun Country, kid. The shrimp is good, the women are better, and everybody's inbred.

Amanda is reading a book.

AMANDA (reading)
"In a large percentage of the cases so far studied, the deceased person whose life the present person claims to remember died in some violent manner. It may suggest that the shock of such a death was so intense that its memories more easily penetrate the brain consciousness of the new personality."

MICHAEL (smiles)
Timothy Leary, right?

She holds the book up, smiles. We see the photo of Harlan Jarrell on the back.

SAM (grins)
You want to remember yourself in the next life, folks? Go suck a .45.

They pull into a dumpy trailer park. Sam looks out.

EXT. A TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

They get out of the big limo -- people stare at them from the trailers. A little boy is watching them nearby.

THE LITTLE BOY (yelling)
Hey, mom! It's that guy on TV!

Another little kid runs up to Michael.

THE LITTLE KID
Are you famous?

MICHAEL (grins)
Not me.

THE LIMO DRIVER
Come on now, you leave the man alone, hear?

THE LITTLE KID
You're famous, aren't you? Who are you?

The limo driver shoos the kids off and they go to the door of a trailer, knock on it. They hear a baby crying inside. There is no answer. They knock again. The door opens.

A woman in her mid 20's stands there. SALLY MORAN looks tired, very used.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Mrs. Moran?

SALLY (after a beat)
Hey, it's you! You come. He gonna get the reward?

She looks at Michael a long beat, smiles, dazzled.

SALLY
Shoot, I bet I look like a mess.

MICHAEL (smiles)
Is your husband home?

SALLY
He just gone out to get another six-pack. He'll be right back.

They stand there looking at each other.

MICHAEL (after a beat, smiles)
May we come in?

SALLY
I'm sorry -- I just ain't ever seen a TV person before.

MICHAEL
Thank you.

She leads them in.

INSIDE THE TRAILER - NIGHT

They step inside -- it is very cramped and very messy. She starts picking things up quickly.

They glance around the trailer. It is obvious these people are very poor. They hear a pickup roar up outside.

SALLY
That's him. I'll go check on the baby.

She heads back to the other room of the trailer.

They stand there a beat expectantly -- Michael looks nervous -- and then the trailer door is kicked open by a cowboy boot.

BILLY MORAN stands there. He is in his early 30's. He is a very good-looking man, tall, blond. He does not look at all like the sketch of Ethan that Elizabeth made.

He is bare-chested and deeply tanned. He wears jeans, cowboy boots, a thick belt with a fancy buckle. Strapped to the belt is a black, rubber-handled survival knife.

Billy looks at them a beat, grins.

BILLY (to Michael)
Hey, bro! You got my reward?

There is an inheld, hooded eruptability about him, an almost sinister stillness. He speaks with a twang, but in a soft kind of hush.

MICHAEL (after a beat, smiles)
We're going to have to talk about it.

BILLY (smiles)
I like talkin about money.

They look at each other a beat.

BILLY
Where's Sally?

She comes out of the back room. She looks nervous.

SALLY (forces smile)
Hi, hon.

BILLY
Go over to your mother's. Take the baby.

SALLY (after a beat)
Right now?

BILLY (after a beat)
Uh-huh.

MICHAEL
She can stay.

BILLY (after a beat)
She's my wife.

He takes the knife out of its holder. He looks at it, starts trimming his nails with it. Sally heads away into the back room.

MICHAEL
I meant we didn't want to interrupt anything.

BILLY (after a beat, smiles)
It's cool, bro. You want a beer?

He opens the six-pack he brought in with him. We hear the back door slam, a car start up outside -- Sally is gone.

MICHAEL
No thank you.

BILLY (smiles)
You ain't a beer drinker, huh?

He turns to Amanda.

BILLY
How about you, hon? You wanna party?

He laughs a little. Amanda Karan shakes her head, looks at him.

BILLY (smiles)
We ready to talk about the money?

A beat, and Michael nods.

MICHAEL
Tell me about the knife you called us about.

BILLY
What do you wanna know, bro?

MICHAEL
Describe it.

BILLY (smiles)
I told you. It's up in the air. Gleamin.
(he laughs)
I guess I got the magic word, huh?

MICHAEL (too hard)
No. Describe it. What does it look like?

BILLY (after a beat, smiles)
You ain't on my side, huh, bro?

MICHAEL (hard)
Describe it. Tell me what it looks like.

Billy looks at him a long beat assessingly, amused.

BILLY
It's got a bone handle.

They stare at him a long beat. Billy laughs.

AMANDA
What's Elizabeth like?

BILLY (after a beat)
Hot. Sweat pourin off her. I can't get enough.

They keep their eyes on him -- he has his eyes on Amanda's.

BILLY
You know what I mean?... Hon?

A beat, as he laughs -- Michael turns away from him. He sees Michael turn away.

BILLY (evenly)
Whatsamatter, bro?

Michael looks at him. The two of them stare at each other a long beat.

SAM
Tell us about the yellow room.

BILLY (after a beat)
I'm standin in the room... she comes in... There's a storm... Curtain blowin... There's some kinda fire... Knife in the air.

MICHAEL
You heard all that on TV.

AMANDA
Are you frightened in the yellow room?

BILLY (after a beat)
I don't scare easy, hon.
(a beat)
I'm pissed off.

SAM
What are you pissed off about?

BILLY (after a beat, smiles)
I don't know.

AMANDA
When did you start having these flashes?

BILLY
Couple years ago, two, three years -- you're the doctor, aintcha, hon?

Amanda looks at him a beat, nods. Michael keeps staring at him.

SAM
Do you believe in reincarnation, Billy?

BILLY
I believe in cash, daddy.
(he smiles)
You gonna give me some?

AMANDA
If you met Elizabeth, would you know it's her?

BILLY (laughs)
Oh yeah. Yeah!

SAM
Do you want to meet her?

MICHAEL
It's premature! He could've guessed at the knife! He doesn't look anything like the sketch!

AMANDA
Sometimes there's a physical similarity, sometimes there isn't.

BILLY (after a beat, smiles)
This Jody bitch really that rich?

Michael stares at him. He looks like he's going to hit him.

AMANDA (quietly)
You don't have a right to stop it, Michael.

Billy watches them as they look at each other.

BILLY (quietly, to Michael)
How come you don't want me to meet her, bro?

He smiles a knowing smile.

BILLY (to Michael)
She hot like Elizabeth?

He laughs. Amanda watches the two of them as they look at each other.

INT. THE GULFSTREAM - DAY

On the couch up in front, Billy is laughing, flirting with the Stew. In the back of the plane, we see Sam on the phone.

Michael sits next to Amanda in the seats -- they are watching Billy.

MICHAEL (watching Billy)
We're playing with fire.

Amanda says nothing, watches Billy. He has his hand on the Stew's hip now, feeling her butt a little. She laughs; she likes it. His eyes catch Michael's. They look at each other.

AMANDA (after a beat; quietly)
It's Jody's choice, not yours.

Michael keeps staring at Billy. Billy smiles that half-smile.

MICHAEL (to Amanda)
We're playing out a psychodrama.

INT. THE GULFSTREAM - NIGHT

It has landed -- it is pulling up to a gate area. As it does, Michael looks out the window; he sees several limousines, lots of lights, a group of people. He sees Jody standing about a hundred feet in front of the people.

Billy is up front, sitting next to the Stew now, talking to her...

MICHAEL
What is this?

SAM
We're going live. We're breaking into programming.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
We're what?

SAM
It was Nelson's decision.

MICHAEL (getting up)
Fuck Nelson, I'm --

SAM (upset)
Michael, this is the biggest story we'll ever see! She agreed to it!

MICHAEL (in disbelief)
She -- what about him?

he indicates Billy, who is still talking to the Stew.

AMANDA (evenly)
You can't stop it, Michael.

SAM (to Michael)
Fuck him. We don't tell him.

Billy glances away from the Stew, looks out the window. He sees Jody standing there. He stares.

EXT. THE PLANE - NIGHT

Jody stands by herself in front of the others. The stairs to the Gulfstream come down. She stares.

The doors open. Billy stands at the top of the stairs a long beat, staring at her. He comes slowly down the stairs. He gets to the bottom and stops, staring at her.

They walk slowly towards each other. They are almost up against each other, still staring at each other. They move closer, moving as though in a trance.

Michael watches them from the top of the stairs, his face expressionless.

She puts her hand very gently to Billy's face -- a long beat, as he stares at her. He closes his eyes. He rubs his face very gently, very tentatively against hers -- as she starts to cry now without sound, her eyes closed.

They find each other's lips very gently, tentatively, their eyes closed, brushing lips, and then kissing very gently.

JODY (in a whisper)
I love you, Ethan.

And then the kiss gets deeper, their mouths exploring each other, holding onto each other.

Michael watches them from the top of the stairs. He looks like he is in shock. From his POV, we see a limousine pull up quickly. She leads Billy into the limo, holding onto him; they move trance-like, as if they can't bear to let go of each other. The limo takes off into the darkness.

The group of people break for the plane. Nelson, Sal DeSantis, Arthur Simms, and Rita are there -- they surround Sam and Amanda.

NELSON (hugging Sam)
You did it -- I can't believe this! We found the sonofabitch! Where's Mikey?

He is walking away from them, looking dazed and in shock, towards the gate area. Amanda watches him. Nelson hugs Amanda.

NELSON (continuing)
Congratulations, doc! You're about to be a multi-millionaire. I'm giving you your own show. We'll find these people once a week. I'll put it up against America's Most Wanted.

AMANDA
No thank you.

NELSON (ignoring it)
You're welcome. You'll go down to Christophe, we'll get you a make-over, highlights in your hair, the works. I'll talk to your agent.

AMANDA
I'm a psychiatrist, Mr. Wyland, I don't have an agent.

NELSON (shocked)
You don't have an agent? Everybody in L.A. has an agent.

Amanda assesses him a long beat.

AMANDA
Were you constipated as a child?

NELSON (after a beat, grins)
How did you know that, doc? You're really good!

AMANDA (after a beat)
Because it's the only explanation for why you're such a colossal asshole.

Nelson stares at her.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

He is sitting in front of the TV. The sound is off. He looks like he hasn't slept all night. On screen is film of Jody and Billy in each other's arms at the airport. In front of him is a newspaper -- the headline says: PAST LIFE LOVERS REUNITE. The heading is huge; the full-page photo shows Jody and Billy kissing. The phone, we see, is off the hook. He watches the screen, his eyes glazed.

The door opens. Jody stands there. They look at each other a long beat.

JODY (quietly)
I'm just getting my suitcase.

She starts for the bedroom.

MICHAEL (quietly)
He's a punk, Jody... he's a scam artist.

JODY
I don't care.

She starts for the bedroom gain.

MICHAEL (getting up)
You don't care?

He follows her into the bedroom.

She's putting things into the suitcase quickly.

MICHAEL
What about his wife and his baby, don't you care about them, either?

JODY (as she packs)
He doesn't care. It's his choice. We'll send her some money.

MICHAEL
Everybody gets hurt. Is that how it works in this life?

She turns to him.

JODY (emotionally)
I warned you. I told you to be careful.

MICHAEL (emotionally)
You don't even know him!

JODY
I know him better than I'll ever know anyone else!

She is finished with the suitcase, starts out.

MICHAEL (hard)
You don't love him. You love the idea of him. You love something you've got in your head.

A long beat; she sees the pain on his face.

JODY (quietly, tenderly)
Don't you understand, Michael? I've found him. I've found him.

MICHAEL (quietly)
Don't do this. Don't do this. I love you.

He reaches for her -- she moves away --

JODY (after a long beat)
Goodbye, Michael.

She heads out. A beat, as he leans against the wall, pressing himself against it in frustration and pain -- and then he hurries after her.

INT. THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HIS APARTMENT

He comes out after her -- and almost runs into them. She is in Billy's arms. She is crying, her back to Michael. Billy's eyes are on him.

BILLY
Well, what can you do?
(a beat; he smiles)
Life sure is strange.

They look at each other. She is crying in Billy's arms, her back to Michael.

And they head toward the elevator. Michael watches them.

As they get into the elevator --

BILLY (to Michael)
Never fear -- Ethan's here. Hey, bro? When do I get my cash?

He smiles -- as she gets into the elevator, Jody looks at Michael for a split-second.

INT. THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE HIS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Amanda is knocking on Michael's door. There is no answer. She starts pounding on it.

AMANDA (yelling)
Michael, it's Amanda!

She pounds on it again. A long beat, and then the door opens. Amanda takes a long look at him. He looks terrible.

AMANDA
You okay?

A beat, and Michael nods.

AMANDA
Can I come in?

A beat, and Michael opens the door.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is dark -- all the lights are off -- Amanda sees the phone off the hook. Michael sits back down in the darkness, stares at her, his eyes glazed. Amanda looks at him.

AMANDA
They're gone.
(a beat)
I'm sorry.

Michael says nothing, a long beat, then --

MICHAEL (hollow tone)
We had no right to let them meet.

AMANDA
Why? Because you didn't want to lose her?

MICHAEL
She's ill. She's mentally ill. He's a hustler. He's using her.

He speaks quietly, as if in a fog. Amanda looks at him a beat.

AMANDA (quietly)
We have no right to interfere with fate.

Michael says nothing, just stares at her, his eyes blank.

AMANDA (gently)
Take some time off, Michael. Get her out of your head.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Where did they go?

AMANDA (after a beat)
I don't know.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Whose side are you on?

AMANDA (taken aback)
What?

MICHAEL (hard)
Whose side are you on, Amanda?

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE AT EBS - DAY

He looks unshaven, tired. He is throwing things into a duffel bag. Sam walks in, stares at him.

SAM (after a beat)
What are you doing?

MICHAEL
I'm going to take some time off.

Sam looks at him in utter disbelief.

SAM
Now? You're going to take some time off now? Nelson's talking about trying to book us into prime time.

MICHAEL
I've got to sort things out.

SAM (after a beat)
It's her, isn't it?

Michael looks at him a beat.

SAM
She's a nutcase, Michael. Let's be real here. She needs therapy, electroshock, whatever. You're going to let her suck you into her madness? Come on, Michael, you can find some other great piece of --

MICHAEL (hard, violently)
Don't!

Sam looks at him a beat.

SAM
I was always afraid this was going to happen. I was always afraid that if you really made it, you'd try to destroy it.

Michael looks at him a beat.

SAM
You're as self destructive as she is.
(a beat, he grins sarcastically)
Maybe you were lovers in a past life, huh?

Michael looks at him a beat.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He is sitting in the dining room, reading. There is a stack of Harlan Jarrell books next to him.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

He is asleep on the dining room table, books surrounding him.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He is watching TV in the dark room. He looks worse than he did before.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)
-- Crandall and Billy Moran have disappeared. A spokesman at EBS said today the network had no comment on the disappearance and did not know the whereabouts of the couple.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

He is watching a tape of Amanda's interview with Jody.

JODY (with difficulty)
I see a knife. It's gleaming, it's up in the air. It's got a bone handle.

AMANDA
How do you feel when you see it?

JODY (after a beat)
I'm scared... I'm excited, too.

AMANDA
Turned on?

JODY (after a beat)
Yes.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

He is watching TV in the dark room.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)
-- suffered the nervous breakdown when she was eighteen years old and spent six months in a psychiatric institution. Authorities in Monroe, Louisiana, meanwhile, say that her reported past-life lover, William Moran, has been arrested six times for petty theft and assault.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - DAY

He is watching a taped rerun of his own show.

The audience laughs.

MICHAEL
-- who will share their previous lives with us. I'm not going to share mine with you because I've never had one. No, sir. Once is more than enough. Some poor schmuck's going to have to come back as me.

The audience laughs, hoots, and applauds.

MICHAEL (smiles)
We'll be -- right back! Into the past! After this station break! So our sponsors can make money! Right now! In the present!

The audience laughs, applauds louder.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is dark -- on the TV, a videotape of Jody and Billy at the airport, kissing, their mouths exploring each other.

He is lying down on the couch -- he sits up suddenly, looks away from the set. He sits a long beat and gets up.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - THE BATHROOM - NIGHT

He goes into the bathroom, puts the bright lights on, stands in front of the mirror. A long beat, and then he looks at himself in the mirror. He looks awful. There are deep circles under his eyes -- it looks like he hasn't shaved in weeks. He has lost weight; he is pale. A long beat, as he looks at himself, and then he takes a cologne bottle and smashes it into the mirror. The mirror shatters.

EXT. TRAILER COURT - GRAND ISLE, LOUISIANA - DAY

He gets out of a rent-a-car. He has shaved, but he still looks bad. He goes up to Sally Moran's trailer, knocks. He wears jeans and a jacket, looks very different from the last time he was here.

WOMAN
You lookin for Sally?

MICHAEL
Yes.

WOMAN (smiles)
Three miles down, big new house, can't miss it.

EXT. A NEW HOUSE - GRAND ISLE - DAY

He walks up to the porch. Sally opens the door, looks at him. She wears a tank top and shorts.

MICHAEL
Can I talk to you?

SALLY (after a beat)
You don't look so good.

INT. THE HOUSE

They are in the new kitchen, new appliances around them. He looks disturbed.

MICHAEL
When did they send you the check?

SALLY
Couple days after he left.

MICHAEL
Have you heard from him?

SALLY
Not one word.

He looks at her. We see what looks like old, healed burn marks near the top of her tank top.

SALLY (continuing)
It's the only good thing that ever happened to me. I've got money -- the baby and I -- look at all this stuff.

Michael looks at her a beat.

MICHAEL
What's this?

He indicates the burn marks -- she moves away from him warily.

SALLY
It's nothin.

MICHAEL (after a beat, gently)
You can tell me.

SALLY (after a beat, quietly)
What do you care, mister? You got what you wanted, didn't you? You got your big TV show. Billy got the money. I got all this.

He looks at her a long beat.

EXT. A PHONE BOOTH - GRAND ISLE

He stands in the booth listening to his messages at home.

SAM (O.S.)
Michael, where the hell are you? Call me.

AMANDA (O.S.)
Michael, it's Dr. Karan, I'm... concerned about you. Please call me.

JERRY SPRINGER (O.S.)
Michael, it's Jerry Springer, I'd like to put you on the show. My number is 212-854-8200.

A WOMAN'S VOICE (hushed)
Michael?

He freezes, turns in the booth.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE
Help me.

She sounds like she's crying; it sounds like it could be Jody's voice.

A beat -- as he stares, then hangs up and starts to dial quickly.

INT. LAX - NIGHT

He gets out into the gate area -- Sam is waiting for him there. Michael looks keyed-up, there is a sense of urgency about him. They talk as they walk quickly.

MICHAEL
What have you got?

SAM
Nothing. Wherever they are, they left a very cold trail.

MICHAEL
I've got to find her.

SAM
Look, kid, we're doing our best --

MICHAEL (hard, violently)
Do better!

Sam stares at him a beat.

SAM
Nelson wants to talk to you.

MICHAEL
I don't want to talk to him.

SAM
He'll double your salary, Michael. He wants you on the air, not out in the ether.

Michael looks at him a beat.

SAM
I know you're playing hard to get, but I think you're pushing it.

MICHAEL (looks at him)
You think this is a negotiating ploy, Sam?

SAM (after a beat, with concern)
Well, I sure as hell hope that's what it is.

INT. UCLA MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

He walks into Amanda Karan's outer office. He looks like he hasn't slept.

MICHAEL
Is she here?

A SECRETARY
Dr. Karan is in a meeting, Mr. Carey.

He goes to the door leading to the inner office.

SECRETARY (gets up)
You can't go in there --

He opens the door. Amanda sits behind her desk with three other doctors in front of her.

MICHAEL
She called me.

Amanda looks at him.

INT. THE CORRIDOR - UCLA - DAY

They are walking.

AMANDA
How do you know it was her?

MICHAEL (very intense)
I know it was her. I know it.

He stops, looks at Amanda. His eyes are wild -- he looks over the top.

AMANDA (with concern)
You need help, Michael.

MICHAEL (very intense)
I've gotta find her. Please.

Amanda looks at him a long beat, then --

AMANDA
They called a friend of mine. He's the best there is with hypno-regression. Billy had never tried it.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
They called you, didn't they? You set 'em up with your friend. Where is she?

AMANDA (after a beat)
I can't tell you, Michael. You're not in control.

Michael suddenly grabs her by the throat and slams her against a wall.

MICHAEL (quietly)
Where is she?

A beat, as he holds her, and then he realizes what he's done, lets her go, and turns away from her.

MICHAEL (quietly)
I'm sorry. I've never... done anything... like that before.

She looks at him a long beat.

AMANDA (quietly)
I'll make sure she's okay. I promise you.

MICHAEL
She's not okay. She's asking for help. He's dangerous. Be careful.

She looks at him.

INT. MICHAEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is dark. He is watching the tape of Jody kissing Billy at the airport. He stares. The phone rings. He picks it up, eyes still on the tape.

INT. EBS OFFICES - NIGHT

INTERCUT.

SAM (on phone)
Dr. Karan took United Flight 302 to Ft. Myers, Florida. She checked into the Sundial Hotel on Sanibel Island.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Thank you.

SAM (on phone)
You want to take a camera crew with you?

Michael simply hangs up -- his face is deadpan. He stares at the image of Jody and Billy kissing.

INT. EBS OFFICES - NIGHT

Sam stares at the phone he has just hung up. He looks very worried.

EXT. FT. MYERS AIRPORT - DAY

The plane has landed. Michael hurries to a helicopter waiting nearby.

INT. THE HELICOPTER - DAY

As it sweeps low over water, boats, thick mangroves. Michael stares down. They pass over small islands. There are houses hidden inside the mangrove thickets on these islands.

EXT. THE SUNDIAL HOTEL - DAY

It is a high-rise on the beach. He walks in.

INT. THE SUNDIAL LOBBY

He goes up to the desk.

MICHAEL
Amanda Karan, please.

She looks at him a beat.

THE WOMAN
Just a moment.

She goes into the back. He waits, nervous. The Woman comes back out with a STATE TROOPER in uniform.

THE TROOPER
You looking for Amanda Karan?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Yes.

THE TROOPER
You a friend of hers?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Yes.

INT. FT. MYERS HOSPITAL - DAY

They are hurrying down a corridor.

THE TROOPER
Balcony on the third floor. She either jumped or fell.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
She didn't jump. She didn't fall, either.

The Trooper looks at him as they hurry.

THE TROOPER
No sign of a struggle. No note.

Michael doesn't even look at him. His face is deadpan. They get to a door, turn in.

INT. THE HOSPITAL ROOM

There are several doctors around the bed. Amanda has just died. Michael stares at her.

THE TROOPER (to a Nurse)
She say anything?

THE NURSE
She wrote this.

She hands the trooper a piece of paper. He looks at it.

THE TROOPER (to Michael)
Mean anything to you?

He hands it to Michael. We see it in CLOSEUP.

CLOSEUP

We see the words: Roshi... Zen Center... Santa Barbara.

Michael looks at it, shakes his head. He looks at them.

THE NURSE (smiles)
I like your show. I used to watch Springer, but I don't anymore.

Michael stares at her a beat.

MICHAEL (in a mumble)
Thank you.

EXT. THE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

He walks out, starts heading across the dark parking lot towards the street in the darkness.

INT. A PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Somebody watches him as he walks. The MOTOR starts up.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT

As he walks, he hears something behind him, starts to turn.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK

Its MOTOR suddenly revs -- it guns toward him.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT

He turns, blinded by the lights of the truck, covers his face, freezes.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK

It comes to a screeching stop inches from him.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT

The lights are in his eyes. He takes his hands from his face. Billy sits behind the wheel calmly. He wears a straw cowboy hat. He opens the door, hangs out. He has let his hair grow: it is long now like Ethan's. He has a mustache.

BILLY (smiles)
You hungry? You wanna come have dinner, bro?

Michael stares at him.

EXT. A SPEEDBOAT - NIGHT

As it hurtles across the water towards a small island in the moonlight. Billy is at the wheel.

MICHAEL (wary)
Where are we going?

BILLY (smiles)
You ain't nervous, are you?

He looks at him.

BILLY (smiles)
You ain't lookin good. You got some personal problems, bro?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Dr. Karan's dead.

BILLY
We heard about her accident on the TV.

Michael looks at him. As they speed on, he sees a small boat coming in the other direction in the moonlight. The figure at the wheel looks like he's wearing a hood over his head.

MICHAEL (quietly)
You killed her didn't you?

Billy looks at him and shakes his head.

BILLY
I never killed nobody in my life, bro.

Michael watches him.

BILLY (continuing)
I never killed nobody in none of my lives...
(a beat; he smiles)
Far as I know.

EXT. A SMALL DOCK - NIGHT

It is on an island -- there are no other boats around. As they jump off the boat to the dock --

BILLY (smiles)
Watch it now. I don't want you banging your head or nothin.

Michael jumps, follows him towards a house. Three dogs are there barking suddenly -- they are German shepherd puppies.

BILLY (gently, to dogs)
Hey now, ain't nothin to get riled about now.

We see the house now in the darkness: it is a big, two-storey plantation-style house.

INT. THE HOUSE

As Michael follows Billy in.

BILLY
Hey, babe?

And she is suddenly there. She looks terrific in her jeans and blouse, but her hair is different. It is short and curly like Elizabeth's.

She and Michael stand there, looking at each other a long beat.

BILLY (to Jody)
Look what the cat drug in.

She goes to him and gives him a quick, friendly hug. She is away from him before he can hold her.

JODY (brightly)
Michael! It's nice to see you.

Michael stares. Billy smiles.

INT. THE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

They are eating dinner. Jody and Billy are sitting next to each other.

JODY (brightly)
How is it?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
It's very good, thank you.

He watches her. She smiles.

BILLY (smiles)
She can cook. She keeps cookin like this, I'm gonna get fat.

JODY (smiles)
I won't let you get fat.

Michael watches them. We see his pain. They seem a perfectly normal, happy couple.

JODY
I'm sorry about Amanda.

Michael looks at her.

BILLY
He thinks I killed her.

Jody and Michael look at each other.

BILLY (continuing)
Wasn't I right here with you all day, babe?

JODY (quickly)
Yes.

But she averts her eyes from Michael.

BILLY
We got some of that cake?

She gets up, heads from the table into the kitchen. Michael watches her. Billy watches him watch her.

BILLY (quietly)
You gotta leave us alone.
Elizabeth made her choice.

They look at each other a long beat. She comes back with the cake.

MICHAEL
Did Amanda come to see you?

She puts the cake down, keeps standing there next to Billy.

JODY
Yes.

She looks at Michael. Billy casually puts his hand between the legs of her jeans as she stands there.

JODY
She wanted to make sure I was okay.

Billy moves his hand slowly on her thigh, his eyes on Michael. Michael looks at his hand, then at Billy.

JODY
She said you told her I called you.

Her eyes are on Michael. Billy moves his hand slowly, gently.

BILLY
You didn't call him, did you, Elizabeth?

JODY (after a beat)
No, Ethan.

He moves his fingers between her legs as she stares at Michael.

For a moment, it looks like Michael is going to lunge across the table at him.

And then Billy suddenly takes his hand away from between her legs and laughs.

BILLY
Well, hell, what do you say we call it a night?

He puts his arm around her waist, pulls her to him. She and Michael are still looking at each other.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael is in bed, on his back, staring in the darkness. He can hear them upstairs making love.

INT. THE HOUSE - MORNING

It is a glorious, sun-kissed day. he comes out of his room; he's just gotten up. He sees her on a screen-in patio. She is wearing shorts and a halter top. She is reading a book by Harlan Jarrell; we see the cover.

He goes up behind her, looks at her a long beat. In the distance, outside, by the beach, we see Billy, bare-chested, in shorts, a BOOM BOX blasting rock and roll next to him -- he is working on a boat.

She feels Michael looking at her; turns to him.

MICHAEL
I thought you read all those books already.

JODY (after a beat)
It's different reading them now.

They look at each other a beat.

MICHAEL
Why did you call me?

JODY (after a beat)
I didn't.

He steps close to her.

MICHAEL
Yes you did.

JODY (after a beat)
I made a mistake.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
No you didn't.

He puts his hand tenderly on her face. She turns away.

As she turns, he sees a bruise near the top of her tanktop. He traces it gently with his finger. She winces.

JODY (quietly)
He... gets carried away.

MICHAEL (after a beat, gently)
Don't do this to yourself.

She looks at him, her eyes huge, child-like.

MICHAEL (gently)
You don't belong here. You're not Elizabeth, you're Jody. You've got your own life.

JODY (after a beat)
He is my life. He's always been my life.

MICHAEL
You have your own life. Your own. Not Elizabeth's. Yours.

JODY
No I don't.

MICHAEL
Yes you do -- Jody...

He says her name almost in a whisper. He leans in to kiss her -- she turns away at the last second.

JODY
Please, Michael. You're going to get me killed.

He stares at her.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

He walks down to the dock. The BOOM BOX is blasting rock. Billy is working on the boat.

Billy looks up, smiles.

BILLY
Y'all said your tender goodbyes?

Michael looks at him, starts getting on the boat.

BILLY (continuing)
We didn't make too much noise for you last night, did we?

Michael looks at him.

BILLY (smiles)
I didn't want you losin no sleep.

EXT. THE SPEEDBOAT - DAY

As it speeds across the bay on this gorgeous day, Billy at the wheel.

MICHAEL
If you hurt her, I'll kill you.

He doesn't look at him.

BILLY (after a beat; smiles)
I'll just get myself born again, then I'll find you.

Michael looks at him like he's going to hit him.

BILLY (seriously)
I ain't gonna hurt her. I love her.

Michael's look says: Sure you do. Billy sees the look.

BILLY (seriously)
What are you after me for, bro? I didn't do nothin to you. Sometimes -- hell, I almost like you. All I care about is her. It's like I was never alive before her.
(he looks at Michael)
You think you got a right to meddle with that?

Michael looks at him.

BILLY (quietly, with feeling)
Come on, bro -- I'm askin you, man. Leave us alone.

Michael stares at him.

EXT. THE ZEN CENTER - SANTA BARBARA - DAY

It is a beautiful, idyllic place filled with trees and flowers on a hillside in Montecito. Michael is in his Porsche -- he drives up a heavily foliaged dirt road.

INT. THE OFFICE

He sits with a very old ORIENTAL MAN wearing a Tibetan monk's robe.

THE MONK
Roshi?

MICHAEL
Yes. Roshi.

They look at each other a long beat.

THE MONK
Are you Mr. Carey?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Don't tell me you have TV sets here.

THE MONK (after a beat)
No. We do not.

He looks at Michael a beat.

THE MONK
Roshi has been expecting you.

Michael looks at him.

EXT. A HANGING GARDEN - DAY

Michael walks up a narrow path on the hillside -- he gets to a clearing and sees a waterfall above a garden. A figure stands with his back to him wearing a Tibetan monk's robe. Michael walks up behind the figure.

MICHAEL
Roshi?

The man turns. His skull is shaved. His beard is gone now and he is very thin, but HARLAN JARRELL is still a very powerful presence.

They look at each other a beat.

MICHAEL (smiles)
Are you back from the dead too?

JARRELL (slight smile)
No. I simply found it convenient to exit public life.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Amanda put you in touch with them, didn't she?

JARRELL
She knew what they'd mean to me. Karmic cycles are very rare.

MICHAEL
She's dead.

JARRELL (slight smile)
Temporarily.

MICHAEL
Billy killed her.

Their eyes are on each other.

JARRELL
I don't know that he did. Dr. Karan always had an overly delicate sense of responsibility and guilt.

MICHAEL
What did she feel guilty about?

JARRELL
Perhaps she felt guilty about participating in bringing them together. Perhaps she felt guilty about simply participating. I don't know all the answers.
(he smiles)
I'm not God.

Their eyes are locked into each other; this is a kind of duel.

MICHAEL
You know what happened to Elizabeth in the yellow room, though, don't you?

JARRELL (smiles)
Oh, so you believe now, Mr. Carey. Where is your famous cynicism?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
I believe I'd better humor you if I want to get Jody to stop believing in all this.

A beat, as Jarrell laughs a little.

JARRELL (after a beat)
Even if I knew, it wouldn't make any difference. Even if I told you, it wouldn't make any difference. Whatever is fated, is fated. No one can stop it.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
You're crazy as a coot, Jarrell. We do what we want to do. Nobody tells us, nothing forces us.

JARRELL (laughs)
Free will? Free will is an empty concept invented by man to hoodwink himself -- as meaningless as prayer.
(a beat; then hard)
You must leave them alone.

MICHAEL (after a beat; simply)
I can't do that.

JARRELL (after a beat)
Your love does not matter.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
You really do think you are God, don't you?

They look at each other a long beat.

JARRELL
Elizabeth died on the 14th of February, 1890, in Marietta, Ohio.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
How did she die?

JARRELL
She died the way she will always die.

MICHAEL
Did you tell Jody?

JARRELL (smiles)
No man has the right to play God, not even me.
(a beat)
I told Dr. Karan.

They look at each other.

INT. A RENT-A-CAR - DAY

He drives down the main street in Marietta, Ohio. It fronts the river. It is an old, weather-worn industrial town. He passes the Marietta County Library.

INT. THE LIBRARY

He walks up to the desk; the place is empty; books are not big in Marietta, Ohio. There is a WOMAN in her 60's at the desk.

THE WOMAN
Can I help you?

MICHAEL
How far back do you have copies of the local paper?

THE WOMAN
How far back do you need it?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
1890.

THE WOMAN (directly)
It's on the micro-feesh.

MICHAEL (smiles)
Terrific.

It's the first real smile we've seen from him in a long time.

INT. THE LIBRARY - DAY

He sits in a little room, looking at the microfilm. He gets to February 14th. There is nothing on the front page that interests him. He goes inside. Nothing. (There are hardly any photographs in the paper; it is all grey text.)

He gets to February 15th. he sees the big front-page headline: BANKER AND WIFE DIE IN FIRE. The smaller headline says: SHERIFF HAWKINS INVESTIGATES MURDER-SUICIDE.

He scans the article on the microfilm machine.

CLOSER we see: "Ethan and Elizabeth Ward were respected members of this community... Marietta County Sheriff Zeke Hawkins said it appeared that Mr. Ward stabbed his wife to death and then stabbed himself."

A beat, and Michael sits back and stares at the machine.

INT. THE LIBRARY - MAIN DESK

MICHAEL
Do you have any photographs of some people named Ward? Ethan and Elizabeth -- they died in 1890.

THE WOMAN
We don't have any photographs here, maybe the County Historical Society, but I doubt it.

MICHAEL
Is there anybody in town related to them?

THE WOMAN
There's no more Wards around here.
(a beat)
Wait. Elsie Farris is out at the old-age home. I think she's some kind of cousin.
(a beat; she smiles)
She's not going to help you with any photographs, though. She's been blind since the day she was born.

INT. THE COUNTY OLD-AGE HOME - DAY

A black NURSE leads him to a room. ELSIE FARRIS sits there in a wheelchair covered by a blanket. She is a tiny, bird-like old lady. She is blind. She has very light blue eyes. She is very old.

NURSE
Elsie, this man here come to see you, wants to ask you some things.

ELSIE
Is he a nice man?

NURSE (smiles)
I guess so.

ELSIE
What do you want to ask me, nice man?

MICHAEL
I'd like to ask you about Ethan and Elizabeth Ward.

He looks at her.

ELSIE (smiles)
Well, if you take me for a ride, you can't ever tell what I'll tell you.

EXT. THE OLD-AGE HOME - DAY

They are outside; he is pushing the wheelchair in a small, park-like area.

ELSIE
I didn't know 'em. I was born in 1900. There was a lot of talk, though.

MICHAEL
What kind of talk?

ELSIE
You know. The usual kind of small-town talk. Dirty minds and starched linen.

MICHAEL
What did they say?

ELSIE
I never pay that kind of talk no mind.

Michael stops the wheelchair: He gets in front of her.

MICHAEL
It's important to me.

She "looks" at him a long beat.

ELSIE
Do you mind if I feel your face?

A long beat, and then Michael crouches down. She feels his face with her fingers. A long beat, she says nothing, "stares" straight ahead, her face blank.

MICHAEL (finally)
Is something wrong?

ELSIE (after a long beat)
No. You're a nice lookin man.

A beat, and she smiles. The smile dies.

ELSIE
They said he beat her. My daddy said Ethan told him that Elizabeth had herself a lover. They said they never really found her body, everything was too burned.

MICHAEL
What was she like?

ELSIE
Folks said she was uppity. Course, she liked the colored. That didn't help her any. She wasn't from here. She came to teach school. She played the piano.

MICHAEL (after a beat)
What about Ethan?

ELSIE
Well, his own brother said he was mean. My daddy said Ethan was so jealous she couldn't even look at a man. All he cared about was money -- just her and his money.

Michael looks at her a long beat.

EXT. THE FT. MYERS, FLORIDA AIRPORT - DAY

as an Eastern jet lands.

EXT. A MARINA - DUSK

The wind is blowing; the sky has dark clouds.

He goes up to a counter. He wears sunglasses.

MICHAEL
Who do I see about renting a boat?

MAN
You doin some fishin?

MICHAEL (after a beat)
Yes I am.

MAN
You know how to handle her? We got a storm comin in.

EXT. A SMALL BOAT - NIGHT

As it approaches their island. The wind is kicking up in the bay; there are swells.

Michael stares ahead. He sees their house through the trees. It is dark.

EXT. THE DOCK - NIGHT

He jumps off the boat. There are no other boats here. The wind is kicking up some more; there is occasional dry lightning.

The dogs come barking. He shushes the German Shepherd puppies, heads stealthily towards the house.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

It is pitch-black. The door is slightly open. He goes to the door, opens it. It creaks. The wind clatters something behind him. He almost jumps.

INT. THE HOUSE

He steps inside. It is pitch-black, silent. We hear only the NOISES of the wind outside.

He walks slowly, warily, inside the pitch-black house.

A VOICE (O.S.) (behind him)
Michael.

It is a whisper, almost a hiss. He almost jumps out of his skin, whirls.

She is sitting in the darkness in a chair in the living room. He can hardly see her. He reaches for the light switch.

JODY
Don't put the light on.

He moves his hand away from the switch, looks at her. He can't see her face, hidden in the darkness.

MICHAEL
Where is he?

JODY
He went down to Key West.

He moves closer to her now and sees her. She wears a nightgown. Her eye is black, badly bruised. He rushes to her, holds her.

MICHAEL
Come with me. You have to get away from him.

JODY
Ethan killed Elizabeth. He stabbed her to death. Amanda told me.

MICHAEL (emotionally)
You have to get away from him. He's a lowlife. He'll hurt you --

JODY (emotionally)
I can't! Ethan killed Eliza --

MICHAEL (emotionally)
Please, Jody. Please. Please.

He kisses her tenderly -- first her eyes, then her face, then her lips. She starts to cry.

Thunder suddenly booms. There is lightning outside.

The kiss is more passionate -- he is on his knees, in front of her. She tries to break away -- it thunders again.

JODY
Don't -- please don't --

He kisses her again, his hands all over her, pulling her down to the floor.

JODY
Don't -- don't -- don't make me betray him.

They sink down to the floor -- thunder crashes -- the lights suddenly go out -- lightning plays around the room.

He is kissing her... she tries to move her head away from his lips, from side to side... and she stops moving her head... and kisses him hungrily... getting his shirt off... raking his back with her nails.

INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

They are on the living room floor. She is on top of him, cradling him with her legs, naked... Sweat pours off her body... She arches her back. It is dark; we can't see clearly.

Lightning flashes... the wind and thunder create a roar.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK from them. We watch them now from the doorway, which is partly open.

We watch them from the POV of a figure who is standing there.

The CAMERA PULLS CLOSE to them again as she rocks on top of him, her back arching further, her eyes open...

Michael grabs at her, pulls her head down hungrily --

And he kisses her... as the CAMERA PULLS BACK again and the figure in the doorway... watches.

INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

They are still on the living room floor. The wind blows outside, but the thunder and lightning have stopped. He is asleep. Jody lies against him, awake. She is wearing the nightgown.

She hears something, looks at the doorway without moving. Billy stands there. Their eyes meet. There is heartbreak in their eyes. They look at each other a long beat, and then Billy starts walking quietly upstairs.

A long beat, as she lies there, and then she sits up and looks at Michael. She starts to get up, Michael is asleep.

EXT. THE HALLWAY - NIGHT

She comes out of the living room wearing her nightgown. The house is pitch-black. The wind howls outside. She begins moving slowly, quietly up the stairs.

She sees the door to the upstairs bedroom partly open. There is a yellow glow coming from the room.

She moves slowly to the room and opens the door further.

A burning candle is on a dresser. Billy's black-handled survival knife is next to it.

Billy stands in the room, bare-chested, his back to her.

There is a gust of wind. A white curtain billows into the room.

He turns to her. His face is murderous. A long beat, as they look at each other.

INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

There is a thud upstairs. Michael awakes. He listens. He hears a moan.

INT. THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy has her pinned against the wall.

She is crying. She looks very frightened.

BILLY
Do you love me?

JODY (crying)
Yes.

BILLY (smiles)
Yeah, but do you love me? Tell me that you love me, Elizabeth.

JODY (crying)
I love you, Ethan.

Michael comes in the door behind them. Billy keeps her pinned against the wall.

MICHAEL (quietly)
Let her go.

BILLY
Fuck you.

MICHAEL (to Jody)
Tell him.

JODY (crying)
I can't.

MICHAEL
Tell him you're leaving him!

JODY (crying)
I can't leave him!

MICHAEL
Yes you can. Yes you can!

BILLY
She ain't goin nowhere, bro.

Billy starts to kiss her. Michael turns away from them. He sees the survival knife on the dresser.

Billy, his back to Michael's back now, is kissing Jody.

Her eyes face Michael. She sees him turn, the knife in his hand, gleaming high in the air. Billy sees her eyes, wheels, grabs Michael's hand. He slams Michael against the wall, Michael's hand holding the knife -- Billy holding Michael's hand.

The candle falls to the floor. The curtain goes up in flames. The dogs outside start to bark.

The knife falls to the floor. Jody picks it up, stands there, stares at them.

Billy has Michael against the wall -- he is choking him, harder, harder.

Michael's eyes are on Jody -- the two of them stare at each other -- as Billy squeezes his neck harder, harder.

JODY
N-o-o-o-o-o-o!

It is a full-pitched cry to the gods. And she suddenly hurtles toward them... the knife high in her hand, gleaming... as flames sweep the room... and she brings the knife down into Billy's neck.

Blood sprays on the wall. The dogs bark outside.

And she starts to sob. Michael holds her, kisses her neck.

EXT. THE BOAT - NIGHT

She stares, her eyes vacant -- the boat is out on the bay. The house burns. She sky is lighted from the fire. We hear the dogs bark.

He holds her close as they watch the house and the fire-filled sky.

MICHAEL (quietly)
You're free.

She stares at the sky and at the burning house, her eyes lost.

JODY (in a whisper)
I love you.

He holds her close.

INT. NINTH FLOOR - EBS BUILDING - DAY

Michael gets out of the elevator. He wears his Armani suit. He looks great. As soon as he gets off the elevator, Debbie, the production assistant is there.

DEBBIE (nervous)
Twenty minutes, Michael.

MICHAEL (grins)
I'm here, I'm here.

Someone hands him his mail. He glances through it.

DEBBIE
Do you want to see the pre-ints?

MICHAEL (grins)
God no.

As he glances through the mail, he sees something that catches his eye. It is a large manila envelope. The return address says: Marietta County Library.

MICHAEL
I'll be right there.

He turns into his office.

INT. HIS OFFICE

The big TV set is on, but there is only snow on the screen.

As soon as he gets into the office, he opens the manila envelope. He pulls something out of it. It is an old photograph.

CLOSEUP: THE PHOTOGRAPH

The three of them are smiling. Ethan is on the left -- he looks just like Jody's sketch of him. Elizabeth is in the middle -- she looks just like Jody's sketch. Another man stands on her right.

He looks just like Michael.

At the bottom are the words: Ethan, Elizabeth, and David Ward.

INT. HIS OFFICE

Michael stares at the photograph. On the big TV, the snow turns to footage.

It is Michael's audience in the studio. They are stomping their feet. They are yelling "Go, Michael! Go, Michael! Go, Michael!" Michael, onscreen, is smiling a big smile.

Michael stares at his image on the TV screen, as we --

FREEZE FRAME.

FADE OUT.